



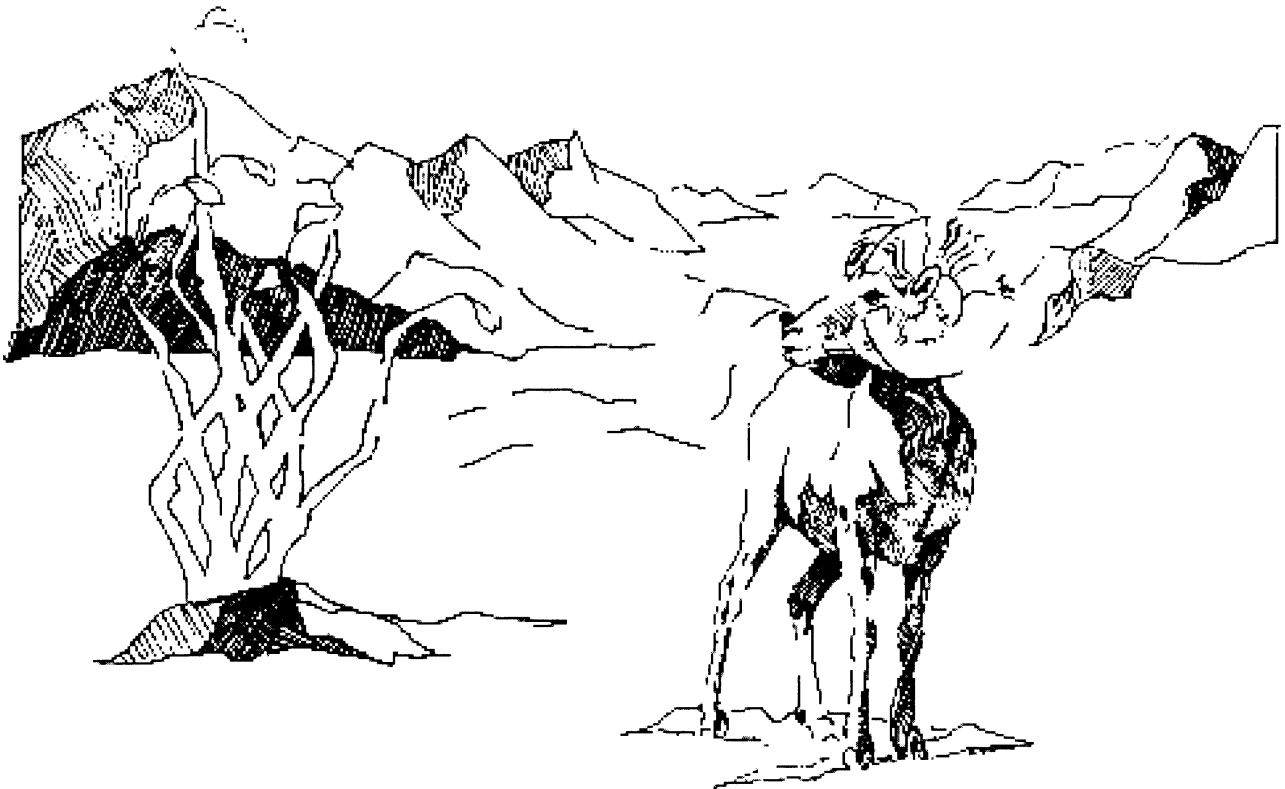
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Arizona State Office

Yuma District Office

January 1992



Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment



The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the balanced management of the public lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield; a combination of uses that take into account the long term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific and cultural values.

BLM-AZ-PT-92-006-1600



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
YUMA DISTRICT OFFICE
3150 WINSOR AVENUE
YUMA, ARIZONA 85365



IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 12, 1991

Dear Reader:

The document accompanying this letter is the Final Environmental Assessment on an amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan. The proposed resource management plan amendment is a slightly modified version of the proposed action alternative analyzed in the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Assessment amendment issued to the public for review and comment June 14, 1990. The environmental assessment analysis and public comments revealed no significant impacts from implementing the proposed plan amendment.

Anyone who participated in this planning effort and who has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval of the proposed resource management plan amendment, or any part of it, may protest such approval. The protest may raise only those issues which were submitted during the planning process. Protests must be in writing and must be filed with the Director (760), Bureau of Land Management, Room 909, Premier Building, 1725 I Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240 within the 30-day protest period. The protest period ends 30 days after the notice of filing is published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register.

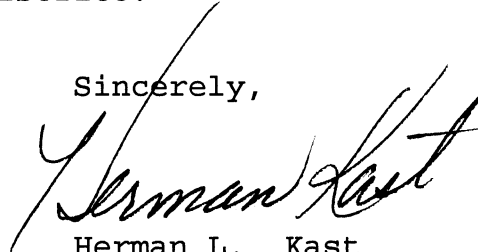
Protests must include the following information: 1) the name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest; 2) a statement of the issue or issues being protested; 3) a statement of the part or parts of the plan being protested; 4) a copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and 5) a concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.

Except for any portions under protest, the proposed resource management plan amendment will become final after 30 days. A Record of Decision will be prepared documenting the final decision of the State Director. The availability of the Record of Decision will be published in the Federal Register. Copies of

the Record of Decision will be available to the public on receipt of a request in the District or Area Offices.

We in the Yuma District, and Havasu and Yuma Resource Areas, thank all who participated in this planning process and contributed to the development of this document. Your help and cooperation has been valuable in resolving natural resource management issues in the Yuma District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herman Kast", written in a cursive style.

Herman L. Kast
District Manager

Yuma District

Resource Management Plan Amendment

Draft () Final (X)

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

1. Type of Action: Administrative (X) Legislative ()

2. Abstract: This Resource Management Plan Amendment describes the proposed actions for managing the public lands and resources in the Yuma District.

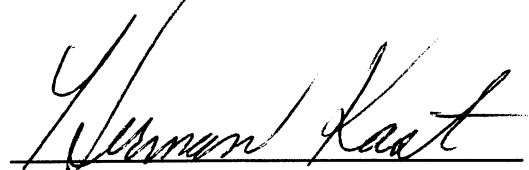
3. Comments on the draft Resource Management Plan Amendment were received from the individuals, groups, and agencies listed in Chapter V.

4. For more information contact:

Dave Curtis
Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Bureau of Land Management
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365
Telephone: 602-726-6300

5. Protests to this amendment must be addressed to the Director, Bureau of Land Management, in the Washington Office and postmarked within 30 days of the date of publication of the Notice of Availability by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register.

Recommended.



Herman L. Kast
District Manager
Yuma District Office

Approved.



For Lester K. Rosenkrance
State Director
Arizona State Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed the environmental assessment on the Yuma Planning Amendment. I have determined that implementing the preferred action alternative will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required. I have determined that the preferred action is in conformance with the existing Yuma District Resource Management Plan (Record of Decision signed March, 1987).

Recommended by:

Les D. Deike
Havasu Resource Area Manager

10-8-91
Date

Michael Taylor
Yuma Resource Area Manager

10/1/91
Date

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SUMMARY

This document discusses two alternatives to resolve planning issues in the Yuma District. The preferred alternative is to amend the Yuma District Resource Management Plan to provide: (1) no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases in riparian areas; (2) categorization of desert tortoise habitat; (3) designation of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area; (4) adjustments in lands available for disposal; (5) additions to lands identified for acquisition; (6) withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area; (7) adjustments to District off-highway vehicle designations; and (8) adjustments in competitive-use, off-highway vehicle area designations. This amendment would involve changes in general management guidance for the District's Wildlife Habitat and Recreation Programs, as well as specific changes in the wildlife, special management areas, land ownership adjustments, and recreation issues.

The alternative to the proposed amendment is no action.

Environmental consequences from implementing the preferred alternative would generally be beneficial be-

cause the amendment would serve to effect an increase in protection for cultural resources, recreation opportunities, natural features, vegetation, visual resources, wilderness values, and wildlife. There would be no immediate or direct significant adverse impacts. The only adverse impacts associated with the preferred alternative are those involving a loss of Federal protection for cultural resources, visual resources, and wildlife habitat due to disposal. However, since National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 compliance documentation must be completed before disposal actions can be approved mitigation measures could be required to alleviate adverse effects.

Under the No Action Alternative, without a resource management plan amendment, oil and gas leases within riparian areas and mining operations within the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area could result in adverse impacts to recreation opportunities, natural features, vegetation, and wildlife.

INTRODUCTION

There have been two previous amendments to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan. These, attached as appendices, were considered routine and noncontroversial by District management. According to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy, each was subjected to an environmental assessment in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality requirements for implementation of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*.

Findings of No Significant Impact were filed with the environmental assessments, and after a 30-day public review and protest period, decision records were signed by the State Director. The first, Environmental Assessment No. AZ-050-7-26 was signed May 18, 1987; the second, Environmental Assessment No. AZ-050-9-07, was signed December 2, 1988.

This document also is a final environmental assessment on the environmental consequences of amending the Yuma District Resource Management Plan approved in 1987. Because this amendment addresses various portions of the Resource Management Plan, District management decided to give the public an opportunity to review and comment on the changes.

A notice of intent to prepare the resource management plan amendment was published in the *Federal Register* July 18, 1989. A second notice of intent was published in the *Federal Register* August 25, 1989. A notice of availability for the draft environmental assessment on the resource management plan amendment was published in the *Federal Register* June 14, 1990. Local media also were informed and approximately 400

copies were distributed for a 60-day public review period. A public meeting for questions and comments was held in Quartzsite, Arizona, on June 29, 1990.

This final environmental assessment is a modification of the draft. Three changes have been made in response to the public review. Other changes have been made to correct oversights. Editorial revisions comprise the majority of changes.

A Finding of No Significant Impact is attached. This finding is documentation that the implementation of the preferred action examined in the environmental assessment would not have significant adverse environmental impacts.

The Finding of No Significant Impact, this environmental assessment, the earlier environmental assessments/amendments, and other appropriate materials would be considered by the State Director before the Record of Decision is signed. The Record of Decision would not be issued for at least 30 days, allowing the public opportunity to formally protest approval of this amendment (see the protest instructions in the cover letter).

The amendment process complies with the 1983 BLM Planning Regulations which specify procedures that must be followed before a resource management plan can be changed (43 CFR 1610.5-5). The environmental assessment represents the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* compliance documentation required by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500).

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

NEED FOR PLAN AMENDMENT

As indicated in the approved Yuma District Resource Management Plan, any change in circumstances or conditions affecting the scope, terms, or provisions of the Resource Management Plan could trigger an amendment (Approved Plan, page 3). Site specific changes have affected the Resource Management Plan management guidelines for wildlife habitat, special management areas, land ownership adjustments, and recreation. These are discussed below.

PLAN AMENDMENT ISSUES

ISSUE 1. No Surface Occupancy on Riparian Areas

Special management guidelines in the *Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan* necessitate amending the Yuma District Resource Management Plan to prohibit surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration and development on riparian lands along the Bill Williams River (BLM 1989c). ("Riparian Area: A specialized form of wetland with characteristic vegetation restricted to areas along or adjacent to rivers and streams, also periodically, flooded lake and reservoir shore areas, as well as lakes with stable water levels.")

The issue has been expanded to the prohibition of surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration and development on all riparian areas in the Yuma District. There are approximately 23,100 acres (1 percent of the public lands) of riparian lands in the Yuma District scattered along the Colorado, Bill Williams, and Gila Rivers. They include vegetative communities found in association with either open water or water close to the surface (BLM 1985).

ISSUE 2. Categorization of Desert Tortoise Habitat

The BLM *Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangewide Plan* requires that District Managers categorize desert tortoise habitat areas to

meet three Category Goals (BLM 1988). These Category Goals are described in Appendix A.

Categorizing habitats facilitates achieving the tortoise habitat management goal established by the Director. The overall goal is "... to manage habitat so as to ensure that viable desert tortoise populations exist on public lands. This would be accomplished through cooperative resource management aimed at protecting the species and its habitat."

The Category Goals would be achieved by implementing the Objectives and related Management Actions developed in the Rangewide Plan. The Rangewide Plan specifies that categorizations would be completed using existing data and would be reconsidered whenever a resource management plan is prepared or revised, and results would be documented in the approved resource management plan. Because the desert tortoise in Arizona needs protection, desert tortoise habitat categorization also is included in resource management plan amendments.

ISSUE 3. Designation of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area

The *Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan* proposed that public lands along the Bill Williams River receive special management and that the area be designated as the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area (BLM 1989c).

A resource management plan amendment is needed to achieve this since the Resource Management Plan does not include special management prescriptions for lands along the Bill Williams River and since the area does not have a distinct name.

ISSUE 4. Adjustments in Lands Available for Disposal

The Resource Management Plan stipulated that all Federal lands in Areas 1-8 (5,760 acres) were available for disposal. Area 8, however, includes approximately 2,615 acres of Category II desert tortoise habitat. Thus

PURPOSE AND NEED

a resource management plan amendment is needed to exclude this habitat from disposal action to comply with the BLM management guideline to retain public lands with priority wildlife habitat in Federal ownership.

In addition, changing circumstances have revealed a need to dispose of additional public lands in the Yuma District. These lands are located: (1) around Quartzsite, Arizona, and (2) north of Needles, California. The disposal lands around Quartzsite would be used to accommodate logical community growth. The disposal lands north of Needles are currently under residential trespass and would be sold to resolve this conflict.

A plan amendment is needed since no public lands in the Quartzsite area or north of Needles are identified for disposal in the Resource Management Plan.

ISSUE 5. Additions to Lands Identified for Acquisition

A number of private land parcels in the Yuma District have been identified for acquisition to benefit Federal programs:

- a. Special management guidelines in the *Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan* prescribe acquisition by trade or purchase of all private lands within the Riparian Management Area (BLM 1989c).
- b. The BLM Rangeland Plan for desert tortoise habitat management encourages consolidation of tortoise habitats on public lands, with emphasis on Category I and II tortoise habitat areas. Accordingly, approximately 7,290 acres of private inholdings within Class I and II desert tortoise habitat areas have been identified for acquisition.
- c. Certain private lands surrounded by or contiguous to Crossman Peak and the Swansea Wilderness Area have been identified for acquisition.
- d. Private lands in the Milpitas Wash area have been identified for acquisition to benefit unique natural values.
- e. Miscellaneous private lands along the Colorado River and in Black Mountain, the Aubrey Hills, and the Chocolate Mountains have been identified for acquisition to benefit wildlife.
- f. Miscellaneous State and private lands in the Big Maria Mountains, Wellton Mesa, Cibola Valley, and

Dome Valley have been identified for acquisition to benefit cultural resources.

Since none of the lands described above are identified for acquisition in the Resource Management Plan, a plan amendment is needed before efforts to acquire these lands can be implemented.

ISSUE 6. Withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area

Two long-term visitor areas were designated in the Yuma District Resource Management Plan: (1) La Posa (approximately 11,400 acres) and (2) Imperial Dam (approximately 3,260 acres) (see Table 1-1.) These long-term visitor areas provide long-term winter visitor camping for periods up to 7 months each year. As Table 1-2 shows, winter visitor use of these areas has grown steadily.

Lands in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area have been temporarily segregated from mineral entry until June 3, 1992. A long-term withdrawal is needed. When the Resource Management Plan was approved in 1986 there was only negligible mining activity in the long-term visitor area. Since 1986, however, an increasing number of lode and placer mining claims have been filed. In August 1989, there were 6 lode claims, 51 placer claims, and 5 mill sites within the area (BLM 1989.)

Mill sites and lode and placer mining claims within the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area are not compatible with the long-term winter visitor camping use for which the area was designated. Thus, the Resource Management Plan needs to be amended to withdraw this long-term visitor area for recreational purposes and to protect existing and proposed recreational facilities, and segregate the lands from mineral location and entry.

Lands in the Imperial Dam Long-Term Visitor Area are withdrawn from mineral entry for Bureau of Reclamation project purposes and are segregated from mineral location and entry. Thus, there is no minerals entry issue in this long-term visitor area. However, the area is undergoing withdrawal review and the existing withdrawals could be revoked. If this occurs, an additional amendment may be necessary to withdraw the lands within the Imperial Dam Long-Term Visitor Area for recreational purposes and to protect recreational facilities and segregate the lands from mineral location and entry.

PURPOSE AND NEED

**TABLE 1-1
LONG-TERM VISITOR AREAS**

Areas	Size (Acres)	Undeveloped Camping Units	Total Visitor Capacity	Other Facilities
La Posa	11,400	6,600	13,200	Contact Stations; Ramadas; Well; Vault Toilets; RV Holding Tank Disposal Facility; Telephone
Imperial Dam	3,260	1,995	4,000	Contact Stations; Ramadas; Well and Water Distribution System; Flush Toilets; Amphitheater; RV Holding Tank Disposal Facility; Gray Water Disposal Facilities
Total	14,660	8,595	17,200	

Source: BLM, Yuma District Office files, 1991.

**TABLE 1-2
LONG-TERM VISITOR AREA PERMITS**

Season	Number of Permits
1986 - 1987	3,458
1987 - 1988	4,063
1988 - 1989	4,104

Source: BLM, Yuma District Office files, 1989.

ISSUE 7. Adjustments in Off-Highway Vehicle Designations

Changes in off-highway vehicle designations may be needed because of conflicts between off-highway vehicle use and other recreation uses, off-highway vehicle related impacts on resources, or other management concerns (BLM 1987b).

Since the Resource Management Plan has designated all public lands in the Yuma District for specific kinds of off-highway vehicle use, a resource management plan amendment is needed to accommodate off-highway vehicle designation changes that are defined in subsequent activity plans.

ISSUE 8. Adjustments in Competitive-Use, Off-Highway Vehicle Area Designations

Requests have been received for competitive-use, off-highway vehicle events in areas not presently designated for such use (BLM 1987b).

Since the Resource Management Plan limits competitive-use, off-highway vehicle events to the SCORE Parker 400 course and the Ehrenberg Sand Bowl, a resource management plan amendment is needed to address competitive-use, off-highway vehicle events in additional areas.

PURPOSE AND NEED

AVAILABILITY OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Copies of the Approved Yuma District Resource Management Plan, the *Bill Williams Riparian Manage-*

ment Area Plan, the BLM *Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangeland Plan*, the *Final Yuma District Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement*, and other documents relevant to this plan amendment are available for review in the Yuma District Office (3150 South Winsor Avenue, Yuma, Arizona 85365).

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

There are two alternatives considered in this document. The alternatives were developed to resolve issues and management concerns that appeared since the Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement Records of Decision (1986, 1987) and completion of the Approved Yuma District Resource Management Plan (1987). The proposed action alternative is the BLM preferred alternative.

PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE: AMEND THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The proposed action alternative is to amend the Resource Management Plan to provide for: (1) no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases in riparian areas; (2) categorization of desert tortoise habitat; (3) designation of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area; (4) additions to the lands available for disposal; (5) additions to lands identified for acquisition; (6) withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area for recreational purposes, protect existing and proposed recreational facilities, and segregate the lands from mineral location and entry; (7) adjustments in District off-highway vehicle designations; and (8) adjustments in competitive-use, off-highway vehicle area designations. The amendment also involves changes in general management guidance for the District's Wildlife Habitat and Recreation Programs, as well as specific changes in the wildlife, special management areas, land ownership adjustments, and recreation issues.

Site-specific environmental compliance documentation would be completed for all disposals, acquisitions, and withdrawals. No action would be approved prior to the completion of environmental compliance documentation.

Eligibility and suitability determination and classification on the Bill Williams River will be initiated in Fiscal Year 1992 as part of the Yuma District Resource Management Plan revision effort. Wild and scenic river values will be protected in the interim based on the management prescriptions of the *Bill Williams Riparian*

Management Area Plan and the fact that this portion of the river is located in the Swansea Wilderness Area.

General Management Guidance

The General Management Guidance portion of the Resource Management Plan (page 5) would be revised to incorporate the following provisions:

Wildlife and Fisheries Program (page 6 in the Resource Management Plan)

Approximately 520,220 acres of public lands in the District would be designated for management as Category I, II, or III desert tortoise habitat (see Maps 2-1A and B).

Management levels appropriate to each category goal would be applied to habitat areas. Viable tortoise populations would be maintained in Category I and II habitats through implementation of Management Actions developed in the Rangewide Plan. Habitat areas in Category III would be less intensively managed (BLM 1988.)

In addition, any action affecting tortoise habitat on public lands in California (including Category III habitat), where the desert tortoise is Federally listed as a "threatened" species, would require consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the *Endangered Species Act of 1973*.

Recreation Program (page 9 in the Resource Management Plan)

Conflicts involving off-highway vehicles and other recreation uses, or off-highway vehicle related resource impacts created by the off-highway vehicle designations in the Resource Management Plan, would be mitigated by revising off-highway vehicle designations in applicable activity plans.

Competitive-use, off-highway vehicle events not scheduled for the SCORE Parker 400 course must

ALTERNATIVES

comply with District off-highway vehicle designations and special recreation use permit provisions. Special recreation use permits would be issued on a case-by-case basis. Completion of *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* compliance documentation is necessary before these events would be approved.

Specific Management Guidance

Specific modifications to planning decisions in the Resource Management Plan would be as follows:

Resource Management Plan Issue 1: Wildlife Habitat (page 11 in the Resource Management Plan):

1. Resource Management Plan, page 11, Issue 1, paragraph 1: The number of acres identified for priority wildlife habitat would increase to approximately 332,160 acres from approximately 247,740 acres.
2. Resource Management Plan, page 11, Riparian Areas, paragraph 1: Surface occupancy for oil and gas leases would not be permitted on approximately 23,100 acres of riparian areas.
3. Resource Management Plan, page 11: To be added following the Bighorn Sheep Use Areas subsection:

Desert Tortoise Habitat

Desert tortoise habitat acreage and category determinations will be completed in Fiscal Year 1992. Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas would be managed as priority wildlife habitat. The management guidelines for priority wildlife habitat in the Resource Management Plan would comply with the requirements of the Management Actions for Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas prescribed in the Rangewide Plan.

4. Resource Management Plan, page 11: *Land Acquisition* (sentence to be added to the Land Acquisition subsection):

The District would attempt to acquire 7,240 acres of private lands within Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas through purchase or exchange (see Resource Management Plan Issue 4: Land Ownership Adjustments).

Resource Management Plan Issue 2: Special Management Areas (Resource Management Plan, pages 11 and 12):

1. Resource Management Plan, page 11: To replace the first paragraph under Special Management Areas:

Cultural, natural, and riparian values are a priority consideration on the areas identified in Table 2-1. Allowable uses on special management areas for cultural, natural, and riparian resources include compatible activities or those uses which, with mitigation as needed, preserve or enhance the recognized values.

2. Resource Management Plan, page 12: To be added following Unique Natural Areas and Features subsection:

The Bill Williams River corridor (1,720 acres) is designated as a riparian management area (see Chapter III and Map 2-2 for a description of this area).

Allowable uses within the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area are limited to compatible activities or uses which, with mitigation as needed, preserve or enhance the area's recognized values. Improvements are limited to those compatible with the natural resources for which the area is recognized and those permitted by mining laws. No additional mineral material removal permits or utility rights-of-way would be authorized. Off-highway vehicle use would continue to be limited to existing roads and trails.

The Yuma District would attempt to expand the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area from 1,720 acres to 5,440 acres through the acquisition of private lands along the Bill Williams River (see Issue 4: Land Ownership Adjustments.)

Resource Management Plan Issue 4: Land Ownership Adjustments (pages 14 and 15 in the Resource Management Plan):

1. Resource Management Plan, page 14: The paragraphs under Disposals would be changed to read:

The total disposal acreage in Area 8 would be reduced by 2,615 acres (from 5,760 to approxi-

ALTERNATIVES

mately 3,150) because Category II desert tortoise habitat designation lands in Area 8 would not be available for disposal consideration (see Map 2-3A).

Approximately 4,438 acres of public lands around Quartzsite, Arizona, would be available for disposal through the *Recreation and Public Purposes Act*, exchange or sale.

Approximately 10.45 acres in two parcels of public land north of Needles, California, would be available for disposal through sale. These comprise Disposal Area 19 (D-19, Map 2-3C).

These adjustments, reducing Disposal Area 8 by 2,615 acres and adding Disposal Areas 18 (3,638 acres) and 19 (10.45 acres), increase the total available disposal acreage from 56,205 acres to 57,293 acres. The affected public lands in Disposal Areas 8, 18, and 19 are legally described in Appendix B.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 compliance documentation and individual tract clearances (including compliance with the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*) would be completed before disposal actions could be approved. Exchange would be the preferred method of disposal.

2. Resource Management Plan, page 14: The paragraphs under Acquisitions would be changed as follows:

The District would attempt to acquire a total of 50,170 acres. This is an increase of 18,950 acres over the 31,200 acres identified in the Resource Management Plan. The locations, proposed uses and acreages for these lands are described below and on Maps 2-4A to 2-4M. Lands identified for acquisition are legally described in Appendix C.

- a. 2.07 acres of private land in Topock North for wildlife values.
- b. Approximately 480 acres of private land in the Buck Mountains for Category I desert tortoise habitat.
- c. Approximately 1,280 acres of private land in the Mohave Mountains for Category I desert tortoise habitat.
- d. Approximately 4,480 acres of private land in the Mohave Foothills/Bajada for Category II desert tortoise habitat.
- e. 19.37 acres of private land in the Mohave Mountains for natural values.
- f. Approximately 1,280 acres of private land in Black Mountain for wildlife values.
- g. 7,768.57 acres of private land along the Bill Williams River for unique natural values.
- h. Approximately 635 acres of private land in the Buckskin Mountains for wilderness values and Category II desert tortoise habitat.
- i. Approximately 490 acres of private land in the Big Maria Mountains for Category II desert tortoise habitat and cultural resources.
- j. 199.99 acres of private land in the Milpitas Wash area for unique natural values.
- k. Approximately 1,280 acres of private land in the Aubrey Hills for wildlife values.
- l. Approximately 10 acres of private land on Wellton Mesa for cultural resources.
- m. Approximately 680 acres of State and private land in Cibola Valley for cultural resources.
- n. Approximately 160 acres of private land in Dome Valley for cultural resources.
- o. Approximately 160 acres of private land in the Chocolate Mountains for wildlife values.

Resource Management Plan Issue 6: Recreation (page 17 in the Resource Management Plan):

1. The following would be added to the section, Winter Visitor Management, on page 17:

The La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area would be withdrawn for recreational purposes (long-term camping) and segregated from entry under the general land laws, including the mining laws but not the mineral leasing laws. Approximately 11,400 acres would be withdrawn. These lands are legally described in Appendix D and are shown on Map 2-5.

ALTERNATIVES

2. The last paragraph in the section on Off-Road Vehicle Use on page 17 would be deleted and replaced with the following:

The SCORE Parker 400 course would be the only designated competitive-use, off-highway vehicle area in the District.

managed under special prescriptions; (4) public lands around Quartzsite, Arizona, and north of Needles, California, would remain in Federal ownership; (5) no additional State or private lands would be identified for acquisition; (6) public lands in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area would remain open to entry for exploration and development of locatable minerals; (7) off-highway vehicle designations in the District would not change; and (8) competitive-use, off-highway vehicle area designations would not change.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The Resource Management Plan would not be amended in the No Action Alternative. The following management prescriptions would continue: (1) surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration and development would be allowed on riparian areas; (2) desert tortoise habitat would not be managed under special prescriptions; (3) the Bill Williams River corridor would not be

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED

No other alternatives to the proposed action were considered.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment for the proposed plan amendment is described in Chapter 3 of the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (pages 49-77). Some additional information is appropriate for site-specific features of the proposed amendment.

MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

The potential for locatable minerals in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area is classed as low to moderate (BLM 1989).

Essentially, the potential for locatable minerals is low. The basis for this is a lack of favorable rocks, structures, and alteration in the unconsolidated basin fill beneath the long-term visitor area.

The moderate classification is derived from the number of mineral occurrences in the Dome Rock Mountains to the west, the Plomosa Mountains to the east, and the proximity of the Cyprus Copperstone gold mine.

No known locatable mineral production has occurred in the area.

RECREATION

BLM recognizes recreation use in five undeveloped short-term camping areas in the vicinity of Quartzsite, Arizona. The most intensive use of these areas occurs during the Quartzsite PowWow, an annual rock and gem show held during a 10-day period in February. Noise and dust generated by campers in the short-term camping areas are problems for the residents of adjacent private lands.

The short-term camping areas are listed in Table 3-1 and shown on Map 3-1.

UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS AND FEATURES

The Bill Williams River supports a wide array of plants and wildlife that is highly dependent on the presence of

free water in an area where water is the critical limiting factor (BLM 1989c).

A detailed description of natural features in the Bill Williams River corridor is in the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan (BLM 1989c).

WILDLIFE

Threatened and Endangered Species

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened in Mohave Desert habitats. Public lands in the Yuma District west of the Colorado River are Mohave Desert habitats.

The California yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), listed as endangered in California, is listed as a threatened species in Arizona.

Table 3-2 lists threatened, endangered, and sensitive wildlife species that may occur within the new areas affected by the resource management plan amendment, but which were not included in Appendix E of the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

Important Habitat Features

Desert tortoise habitat categories have been established on public lands in the Yuma District in accordance with criteria in the BLM *Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangeland Plan* (BLM 1989b).

Desert tortoise populations exist in both the Sonoran and Mohave Desert habitats. The Sonoran Desert habitats in Arizona are characterized by relatively steep hills and mountain slopes. In the Yuma District, the Mohave Desert habitats in California generally are typified by smooth valleys and gently sloping bajadas.

A detailed description of desert tortoise habitat in the Yuma District is in BLM's *Status of the Desert Tortoise in the Yuma District* (BLM 1989b). This description includes habitat categorizations.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 3-1
UNDEVELOPED SHORT-TERM CAMPING AREAS IN THE QUARTZSITE VICINITY

Area	Size (Acres)	Total Visitor Capacity	Visitor Days Per Year	Visitors On Peak Day
Mile Marker 112	75	1,400	39,200	1,400
Kofa Drive	370	3,000	67,200	2,400
Plymouth Road	110	500	7,000	250
East Frontage Road	375	400	5,040	180
Mile Marker 99	500	1,600	28,000	1,000

Source: Yuma District Files, 1991

TABLE 3-2
ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AND STATE LISTED WILDLIFE SPECIES
ON LANDS AFFECTED BY THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

Species	Listing Status
Mammals	
Yuma Cotton Rat	Arizona State: Not Included California State: Not Included Federal: Candidate, Category 2
Birds	
Common Black Hawk	Arizona State: Candidate California State: Not Included Federal: Not Included
Ferruginous Hawk	Arizona State: Threatened California State: Special Concern Federal: Candidate, Category 2
Swainson's Hawk	Arizona State: Not Included California State: Threatened Federal: Candidate, Category 3C

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

GENERAL IMPACTS

The following general impacts would apply to conditions under the Preferred Action and No Action Alternatives.

1. Impacts on physical features (water, air quality, and soils) would not be significant.
2. Existing beneficial impacts from management prescriptions for priority wildlife habitat and special management areas would not be affected by implementing either alternative. These management prescriptions restrict development and surface-disturbing activities and help protect cultural resources, recreation use opportunities, natural features, vegetation, visual resources, wilderness values, and wildlife habitat (Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, BLM, 1985).

In implementing either alternative, beneficial impacts would continue from present guidance for specific actions to restrict development and surface-disturbing activities in priority wildlife habitat and special management areas. This is accomplished by confining utility rights-of-way to designated corridors, limiting off-highway vehicle use to existing roads and trails, and retaining all public lands in Federal ownership.

3. Management prescriptions for priority wildlife habitat and special management areas would not affect rangeland production on grazing allotments in the "C" (custodial) category (BLM 1985). These allotments are managed under the special ephemeral rule (*Federal Register*, Dec. 7, 1968) and are grazed only when there is a probability of adequate annual forage for livestock grazing.
4. Development and surface-disturbing activities within visual resource management Class IV areas would not affect visual resources, since changes that alter the basic landscape or attract the viewer's attention are acceptable in these areas. (Chapter 3 in the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement explains the visual resource management classes and their respective management guidelines.)

IMPACTS FROM IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Impacts on Cultural Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would protect cultural resources on approximately 3,020 acres with high or moderate cultural resource sensitivity. These areas comprise approximately 4 percent of the proposed additional priority wildlife habitat and approximately 5 percent of the total area of known high and moderate cultural resource sensitivity in the District.

One petroglyph complex is included in the cultural resources that would be protected by the preferred action to amend the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat.

From Special Management Areas

One historic site and one intaglio are included among the cultural resources that would be protected by amending the Resource Management Plan to designate the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area.

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Amending the Resource Management Plan to allow disposal of approximately 4,448 acres in Areas 18 and 19 would remove Federal protection for cultural resources on these lands. However, prior to the approval of any disposal action, environmental compliance documentation would be completed. In addition, impacts from disposal would be mitigated in compliance with

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

provisions of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800).

Cultural resources on lands acquired by amending the Resource Management Plan would be protected under the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, the *Archaeological Resources Protection Act*, and other applicable legislation (BLM 1985). Important cultural resources on the 18,920 acres identified for acquisition include villages, trails, dance patterns, petroglyphs, intaglios, rock alignments, and ceremonial sites.

Impacts on Mineral and Energy Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to stipulate no surface occupancy on new oil and gas leases in riparian areas would not adversely impact energy exploration and development because: a) the riparian areas cover only 23,100 acres (1 percent) of the District public lands; b) the riparian areas are scattered in narrow corridors along the Colorado, Bill Williams, and Gila Rivers (the largest area, NA-12, is approximately 13,500 acres); and c) except for 1,500 acres bordering the Gila River and 1,780 acres adjacent to the Colorado River south of Yuma, these riparian areas are not considered favorable for oil and gas development (BLM 1987a).

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Amending the Resource Management Plan to identify lands in Areas 18 and 19 for disposal would not impact energy exploration and development in the District since lands in these areas are not considered favorable for oil and gas development (BLM 1987a).

Due to the mineral potential of the 18,920 acres of State and private lands identified for acquisition, there would be no significant impacts to mineral resources.

From Recreation

Amending the Resource Management Plan to withdraw the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area for recreational purposes and segregating the lands from mineral location and entry would have negligible adverse im-

pacts since there is only a low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals on the lands (BLM 1989).

Impacts on Rangeland Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would not adversely impact rangeland production.

Portions of two "I" allotments involving approximately 16,560 acres of the Muse allotment and 480 acres of the Ganado allotment would be classed as priority wildlife habitat. Adverse impacts from the wildlife priority habitat classification would be minimal because these acreages are ephemeral and grazed only when there is ample forage.

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Amending the Resource Management Plan to dispose of 4,438 acres in Area 18 would not have adverse impacts on rangeland production in the three "C" allotments the area involves.

Impacts on Recreation Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would have some beneficial impacts to recreation resources because the action would help maintain present opportunities for backcountry recreation use on approximately 84,420 acres. Recreation activities that would benefit include hiking, remote camping, hunting, and sightseeing.

From Special Management Areas

Amending the Resource Management Plan to designate the Bill Williams River corridor as a riparian management area would have some beneficial impacts because the action would help maintain present oppor-

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

tunities for backcountry recreation use on 1,560 acres along the river corridor. Recreation activities that would benefit include hunting, bird watching, backpacking, kayaking, rafting, and canoeing (BLM 1989c).

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Minor adverse impacts could occur to recreation by amending the Resource Management Plan to identify Area 18 lands for disposal, because Federal ownership and management of all or portions of the Kofa Drive and Plymouth Road short-term camping areas (totalling approximately 480 acres) would be terminated. Disposal actions could cause an estimated 75,000 annual visitor days of recreation use to be transferred to public lands outside of the disposal area.

However, mitigation for these impacts would be identified in the preparation of appropriate *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* compliance documentation before any disposals are approved. One possibility is that new short-term camping areas providing comparable recreation opportunities could be evaluated in the La Posa Activity Plan.

Disposal of all or portions of the short-term camping areas would have some beneficial impacts for recreation resources because the source of conflicts (i.e., noise, dust) between campers and residents on adjacent private lands in the Quartzsite area would be eliminated.

Any beneficial or adverse impacts on recreation resources from the resource management plan amendment to dispose of or acquire other lands would be negligible because current recreation use of these lands is low.

From Recreation

Amending the Resource Management Plan to withdraw the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area for recreational purposes would have beneficial impacts for recreation resources. This action would diminish conflicts between mineral development and mining operations on mining claims and management for long-term camping use by preventing new mill sites and lode and placer mining claims within the area.

Mineral development and mining operations could occur on claims with valid existing rights, but adverse impacts caused by conflicts with long-term camping use would be minimal because only small operations on the existing claims are expected.

Impacts on Natural Areas and Features

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to stipulate no surface occupancy on new oil and gas leases in riparian areas would have beneficial impacts for natural areas and features. The action would prevent surface disturbances from oil and gas leases in the entire 13,500-acre Laguna-Martinez area (NA-12); 160 acres located in both Banded Canyon (NA-6) and the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area; and scattered areas along the margins of the Aubrey Hills (NA-2), Whipple Mountains (NA-3), and Milpitas Wash (NA-II).

Adding Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would protect natural features on a 1,200-acre portion of Banded Canyon (NA-6) and an 8,360-acre portion of Planet Peak (NA-7).

From Special Management Areas

Amending the Resource Management Plan to designate the Bill Williams River corridor as a riparian management area would have beneficial impacts on natural areas and features. The action would protect natural features on a 1,560-acre portion of Banded Canyon (NA-6).

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Amending the Resource Management Plan to provide for the acquisition of private land in the Mohave Mountains for natural values would have beneficial impacts for natural areas and features. Increasing the area by 19.37 acres would benefit scenic and other natural values in the Crossman Peak Natural Scenic Area.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The acquisition of approximately 640 acres of private land in Aubrey Hills for wildlife values would have beneficial impacts for scenic values and wildlife habitat in the Aubrey Hills special management area.

Acquiring private land to add 176.67 acres for Category II desert tortoise habitat and cultural resources to Big Maria Area of Critical Environmental Concern would have beneficial impacts on cultural resources and sensitive plant species.

Impacts on Vegetation

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to stipulate no-surface occupancy on new oil and gas leases in riparian areas would be beneficial for the protection of riparian and other wetland vegetation on approximately 23,100 acres by preventing disturbances from oil and gas leases.

Addition of Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would be beneficial by helping maintain intermountain valley and upland vegetation on approximately 79,140 acres. Actual and potential habitat for one candidate threatened and endangered plant species (*Coryphantha vivipara* var. *alversonii*) would be maintained on an additional 3,020 acres.

From Special Management Areas

Amending the Resource Management Plan to designate the Bill Williams River corridor as a riparian management area would have a beneficial impact on protection of approximately 1,560 acres of upland vegetation.

Impacts on Visual Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Implementing the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would have beneficial impacts for the protection of visual resources on Class II and III visual resource management lands.

These Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas include 13,460 acres in visual resource management Class II and 22,240 acres in visual resource management Class III.

From Land Ownership Adjustments

There would be negligible impacts from amending the Resource Management Plan to dispose of lands in Areas 18 and 19. The action would result in approximately 3,645 acres of Class III landscapes being transferred from Federal ownership.

Impacts on Wilderness

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to add Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would benefit wilderness values on the entire Big Maria Mountains Northern Addition Wilderness Study Area. Also, if the wilderness study area is not designated as wilderness, the resource management plan amendment would be beneficial because it would help protect existing values of naturalness and primitive recreation by restricting development and surface-disturbing activities.

From Special Management Areas

There would be no impacts on wilderness from special management areas.

From Land Ownership Adjustments

There would be no impacts on wilderness from land ownership adjustments.

Impacts on Wildlife Habitat Resources

From Wildlife Habitat

Amending the Resource Management Plan to stipulate no surface occupancy on new oil and gas leases in

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

riparian areas would be beneficial for all BLM-administered aquatic and riparian habitat by preventing disturbances from oil and gas operations.

Adding Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat would provide long-term benefits for wildlife by protecting habitat conditions on approximately 79,140 acres (7 percent of District public lands). Desert tortoise populations in these areas would benefit from the protection of habitat needs for cover, forage, water, and space. Other wildlife species, such as predators, raptors, and nongame species would also benefit from this protection (BLM 1985).

From Special Management Areas

Amending the Resource Management Plan to designate the Bill Williams River corridor as a riparian management area would have beneficial impacts on wildlife habitat. Under the management guidelines for this area, plant growth and species diversity would improve. Habitat conditions would also improve, providing increased cover and forage for the variety of wildlife species that utilize the area (BLM 1989c).

From Land Ownership Adjustments

Amending the Resource Management Plan to provide for the disposal of 4,438 acres in Area 18 could have negative impacts on wildlife habitat. Area 18 contains vegetated washes providing cover and forage for species such as Gambel's quail, nongame birds, small mammals, raptors, and reptiles.

Disposal of 10.45 acres in Area 19 would have negligible impacts on wildlife habitat because of the uses and marginal habitat quality of adjacent lands.

Acquiring private land in the Mohave Mountains and Milpitas Wash for unique natural values would benefit wildlife habitat resources by increasing the amount of lands in priority wildlife habitat. The 19.37-acre area in Mohave Mountains is in a bighorn sheep yearlong use area. Portions of the area in Milpitas Wash are included in a riparian area.

Economic Impacts

From Land Ownership Adjustments

This analysis of economic impacts from land ownership adjustment is based on the assumption that exchange would be the primary vehicle in implementing the proposed land ownership adjustments.

From Sales

Amending the Resource Management Plan to sell approximately 10.45 acres of public land in San Bernardino County would have minor economic impacts because the lands involved are not irrigated (BLM 1985).

From Acquisitions and Disposals

Under the resource management plan amendment, land ownership adjustments would involve the exchange of nonirrigated lands (except for lands identified for acquisition along the Bill Williams River). These exchanges are summarized by county in Table 4-1. The amount of land managed by the Yuma District is only a small portion of the counties in which the proposed disposals and acquisitions would occur. Consequently, no substantive effects on local economies are anticipated from these exchanges of nonirrigated lands (BLM 1985).

The Resource Management Plan identifies irrigated land along the Bill Williams River for acquisition. This is in a tract owned by the city of Scottsdale that covers approximately 7,770 acres in Mohave and La Paz Counties. Pending agreement with the city of Scottsdale, acquiring this land would involve an exchange across county boundaries for lands with comparable water rights. There would be minor losses in the tax bases of Mohave and La Paz Counties. These would be partially offset by corresponding increases in Federal in-lieu-of-tax payments to these two counties.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

TABLE 4-1
PROPOSED OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENTS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL
LANDS IN THE YUMA DISTRICT

County	Acreages		
	Disposals	Acquisitions	Net to BLM
Mohave	- 2,615 ¹	14,550	+ 17,165
La Paz	4,438	3,312	- 326
Yuma	0	170	+ 170
Riverside	0	490	+ 490
Imperial	0	360	+ 360
TOTAL	1,823	18,882	+ 17,859

¹ The only disposal action proposed in Mohave County is to reduce Disposal Area 8 from 5,760 acres to approximately 3,150 acres.

Source: Yuma District Files, 1991.

IMPACTS FROM IMPLEMENTING THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not adversely impact cultural resources. Protection of the cultural resources in Disposal Areas 18 and 19 would continue in compliance with various Federal laws and regulations.

Impacts on Mineral and Energy Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not adversely impact mineral and energy resources. Locatable mineral entry and development would continue to be permitted in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area.

Oil and gas exploration and development would continue to be allowed on riparian lands in the District.

Impacts on Rangeland Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not adversely impact rangeland production because there would be no change in management.

Impacts on Recreation Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would have adverse impacts on recreation resources.

The Kofa Drive and Plymouth Road short-term camping areas would continue to provide an estimated 75,000 annual visitor days of recreation use. Conflicts over noise, dust, etc., would continue to arise between campers on these public lands and residents on adjacent private lands in the Quartzsite area.

Locatable mineral development of the existing lode and placer mining claims and operations on the existing mill site claims in the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area would conflict with long-term camping use management of the area because the claimants and their operators would not be subject to the permits required of recreation users. Since 1986, a number of lode and placer mining claims have been filed. As of August 1989, there were 6 lode claims, 51 placer claims, and 5 mill sites in the

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

area (BLM 1989). If the number of claims continues to increase, the conflict associated with locatable minerals development could impede and complicate recreation management over a large portion of the long-term visitor area.

Impacts on Natural Areas and Features

Implementing the No Action Alternative would have adverse impacts on natural areas and features.

Continuing to apply the Resource Management Plan provisions that do not stipulate no surface occupancy for oil and gas leases could disturb natural features in: a) the Laguna-Martinez area; b) a 160-acre area along the Bill Williams River that is included in both Banded Canyon and the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area; and c) scattered areas along the margins of the Aubrey Hills, Whipple Mountains, and Milpitas Wash.

Impacts on Vegetation

Implementing the No Action Alternative would have adverse impacts on vegetation.

Continuing to apply the Resource Management Plan provisions that do not stipulate no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases could result in the loss of riparian vegetation (BLM 1987a).

Impacts on Wildlife Habitat

Implementing the No Action Alternative would have adverse impacts on wildlife habitat.

Continuing to apply the Resource Management Plan provisions that do not stipulate no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases could result in the loss of aquatic and riparian habitat on BLM-administered lands within the District (BLM 1987a).

Impacts on Visual Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not impact visual resources because there would be no change in the management prescriptions of the visual resource management Class objectives.

Visual resources on approximately 4,438 acres of Class III landscapes in Disposal Areas 18 and 19 would be retained in Federal ownership.

Impacts on Wilderness Resources

Implementing the No Action Alternative would not adversely impact wilderness values.

Economic Impacts

Implementing the No Action Alternative, which would retain Federal lands around Quartzsite, would have adverse impacts to the extent that community expansion would be impeded.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

According to the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1508.7), “cumulative impact” is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts related to the implementation of this amendment were analyzed and none are anticipated.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Amending the Resource Management Plan would involve irreversible commitments of resources including a loss of Federal protection for cultural resources, visual resources, and wildlife habitat on lands transferred out of Federal ownership.

Amending the Resource Management Plan would not entail any irretrievable commitments of resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USE TO THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The short-term use of provisions in the resource management plan amendment to stipulate no surface occupancy on new oil and gas leases in riparian areas would enhance the riparian vegetation, riparian wildlife habitat, and natural features by protecting them from surface disturbances from oil and gas leases.

The short-term actions of adding Category I and II desert tortoise habitat areas to priority wildlife habitat and designating the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area for special management would have long-term benefits for the protection of cultural resources, recre-

ation use opportunities, natural features, vegetation, visual resources, wilderness values, and wildlife habitat.

The short-term action to dispose of the identified Federal lands could have adverse long-term effects on cultural resources, visual resources, and wildlife habitat.

The short-term use of resource management plan amendment provisions to disposing of Federal lands in the Quartzsite area would have long-term benefits associated with the elimination of Federal responsibilities for conflicts between campers and private landowners.

Short-term actions to acquire State and private lands would have long-term benefits regarding the amount of Federal lands open to mineral entry.

The short-term action to withdraw the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area would have long-term benefits by alleviating conflicts to the management of the area for long-term camping use.

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

PARTICIPATING STAFF

- Don Applegate, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Yuma District Office
- James J. Atkins, Environmental Specialist, Yuma District Office
- David A. Curtis, Environmental Specialist, Yuma District Office
- David Daniels, Surface Protection Specialist, Yuma Resource Area
- Harry DeLong, Geologist, Yuma District Office
- Joy Gilbert, Realty Specialist, Yuma Resource Area
- Robert M. Henderson, Wildlife Biologist, Havasu Resource Area
- Susanna G. Henry, Wildlife Biologist, Yuma Resource Area
- Boma Johnson, Archaeologist, Yuma District Office
- David Redmond, GIS Coordinator, Yuma District Office
- Wes Seckler, Ranger, Yuma Resource Area
- Evelyn Stob, Land Law Examiner, Yuma District Office
- Walter Tegge, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Yuma Resource Area

PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

Scoping

- Janel Smith, Arizona Small Miners' Association
- Quartzsite Chamber of Commerce

Public Review and Comments

A notice of intent to amend the Yuma District Resource Management Plan was published in the *Federal Register* on July 18, 1989.

A notice of availability for the draft environmental assessment of the Yuma District Resource Management Plan amendment was published in the *Federal Register* on June 14, 1990. Press releases regarding the notice of availability were distributed to local media sources. Approximately 400 copies of the draft environmental assessment were sent to organizations, agencies, and individuals on the distribution list for the Yuma District Resource Management Plan.

A public meeting was announced and held in Quartzsite on June 29, 1990. Thirty-eight people attended the meeting.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Letters Received on the Draft Environmental Assessment of the Amendment

Twenty-two letters with comments on the draft environmental assessment were received in the Yuma District Office. These are listed below.

Letter	Originator
--------	------------

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1.* | Arizona Commission of Agriculture and Horticulture |
| 2.* | R. N. Martin |
| 3. | Department of the Air Force, Luke Air Force Base |
| 4.* | Norton Consulting |
| 5.* | Gold Fields Mining Corporation |
| 6. | International Boundary and Water Commission |

- | | |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.* | Western Arizona Council of Governments |
| 8. | Arizona State Mine Inspector |
| 9.* | Federal Highway Administration, Region Nine |
| 10. | Maricopa County Department of Planning and Development |
| 11.* | Yuma Audubon Society |
| 12.* | Pierre M. Cantou |
| 13. | Bureau of Mines, Intermountain Field Operations Center |
| 14.* | Harry E. Wilson |
| 15.* | Mohave County Board of Supervisors |
| 16. | U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma |
| 17. | Arizona Department of Commerce |
| 18. | The Resources Agency of California |
| 19.* | Arizona Game and Fish Department |
| 20. | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services |
| 21.* | Colorado River Board of California |
| 22.* | California Department of Fish and Game |

* Comments calling for a BLM response

1



Arizona Commission of
Agriculture and Horticulture

1688 WEST ADAMS • PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007 • (602) 542-4373



District Offices
Fruit & Vegetable Standardization
Market News

FIELD SERVICES

June 14, 1990

Office of the State Chemist
State Agricultural Laboratory
Agricultural Chemicals and
Environmental Services Division

Mr. Herman L. Kast
District Manager
Yuma District Office
3150 S. Winsor Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85365

Dear Mr. Kast:

With regards to the Department of the Interior environmental assessment number 1617-42(050), the Arizona Commission of Agriculture and Horticulture has the following concerns:

1-1

1) Desert Tortoise Habitat - The Commission has responded to the proposed Desert Tortoise Management Plan. (See attached). In short, the addition of nearly 84,500 acres in Category I and II will have an adverse impact on agriculture, including grazing.

1-2

2) Acquisition of lands - The acquisition of lands for wilderness designation, natural values, benefiting wildlife, and cultural resources should not be done at the expense of ranchers who will be unable to utilize the newly acquired land for grazing.

Sincerely,

Ivan J. Shields
Ivan J. Shields
Director

IJS/me
Attachments

1-1. In the preferred alternative the 84,420 acres in Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas would be managed as priority wildlife habitat (See the Yuma District Resource Management Plan, page 11). Our analysis of impacts indicates that this management would not conflict with rangeland production (See the Draft Environmental Assessment, page 17). In addition, impacts would be nonexistent because none of the affected areas are contiguous to agricultural lands.

1-2. Grazing would not be prohibited on lands acquired for wilderness values, unique natural values, wildlife values, or cultural resources.

Approximately 14,010 acres of the total 18,950 acres identified for acquisition in the preferred alternative are in ephemeral grazing allotments (managed in the "C" (custodial) category). The remaining lands are outside of any grazing allotments.

TO:

DATE: 6-8-90

AZ 90-80-0022
State Application Identifier (SAI)

Director
Agriculture & Horticulture Dept
421 Capitol Annex West
Phoenix, AZ 85007

FROM: Arizona State Clearinghouse
3800 N. Central, 14th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85012

AZ Environ. Qlty Rm 304
AZ Environ. Qlty Rm 400-B
AZ Environ. Qlty Rm 603A

Economic Sec. Ag. & Hort.
Indian Affairs Tourism
Transportation Health
Public Safety Water
Mineral Res. Parks, AOC, SNP
Att'y General Land
Corrections Commerce
Civil Rights Region I, II
Education Region III, V, VI
Gov's Office for Children
Administration - 424 Form

JLBC
DDD-DES
Game & Fish
Salt Rv Indian Clearinghouse
Navajo Indian Clearinghouse

Environmental Studies
Tourism

(Comments BY JULY 16 IN BLM)

This project is referred to you for review and comment. Please evaluate as to the following questions. After completion, return THIS FORM ONLY, AND ONE XEROX COPY to the Clearinghouse within 20 WORKING DAYS from the date received. Please contact the Clearinghouse at 280-1315 if you need further information or additional time for review.

_____ No comment on this project _____ Proposal is supported as written _____ Comments as indicated below

1. Is project consistent with your agency goals and objectives? _____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Relative to this agency
2. Does project contribute to statewide and/or areawide goals and objectives of which you are familiar? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Is there overlap or duplication with other state agency or local responsibilities and/or goals and objectives? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Will project have an adverse effect on existing programs in your agency or within project impact area? _____ Yes _____ No
5. Does project violate any rules or regulations of your agency? _____ Yes _____ No
6. Does project adequately address the intended effects on target population? _____ Yes _____ No
7. Is project in accord with existing applicable laws, rules or regulations with which you are familiar? _____ Yes _____ No

Additional Comments (Use back of sheet, if necessary):

(See attached)

Reviewers Signature Frank Shields

Date 6/18/90

Title Director

Telephone 602 542 4373





Arizona Commission of
Agriculture and Horticulture

1688 WEST ADAMS • PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007 • (602) 542-4373



District Offices
Fruit & Vegetable Standardization
Market News

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

FIELD SERVICES

June 14, 1990

Office of the State Chemist
State Agricultural Laboratory
Agricultural Chemicals and
Environmental Services Division

Sherry Barrett, USFWS
AID/TI Co-Chairperson
Ecological Services Office
3616 West Thomas Road Suite 6
Phoenix, AZ 85019

Dear Ms. Barrett:

- 1) Habitat: The tortoises occupy a wide variety of habitats, even showing a tendency to make long excursions. As a result, managers should make allowances for programs which may have an adverse impact on some few tortoises on a seasonal or nutritional excursion.
- 2) Populations: Since tortoise populations are not well known but they are known to exist in numerous locations, programs which may have an adverse impact on known populations of tortoises within a given area should be considered on the basis of the overall result and not solely on the impact it will have on the tortoises.
- 3) Sites for future studies: Several of these areas are near agricultural enterprises.

For example, around the Harcuvar Mountains, Eagletail Mountains, Harquahala Mountains, Estrella Mountains, Maricopa Mountains, Dutch flat, Southern Black Mountains, Rincon Mountains, and Picacho Mountains there is cotton being actively grown. Just west of the Picacho Peak is a large commercial citrus orchard operation. If any of these sites are used, managers should take into consideration the fact that farm management practices might well include such things as pesticide and herbicide treatments, the introduction of beneficial insects, the use of bacteria, nematodes, etc. to control insects, cultural practices utilizing farm equipment and other activities which could be detrimental to any studies of the tortoises.

These areas are utilized extensively for grazing also. The effects these study sites will have on the local ranchers should be a main consideration.

Sherry Barrett
June 14, 1990
Page 2

- 4) Tortoise Management Areas (TMAs): The setting aside of TMAs should be based on a number of criteria including current land use, long term effect on agriculture, effect on state programs such as the Boll Weevil Program, and effect on local ranchers. Since the habitat of the tortoise is extensive, areas which do not have a negative impact on the above should be given higher priority.

- 5) Forage recommendations: Modifying grazing permits and practices would seriously impact the local ranchers. With a range as extensive as the tortoises', there must be areas which are not utilized for grazing. These areas could be set aside for the tortoise without adversely affecting already existing grazing lands.

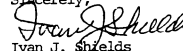
Excluding sheep and livestock from grazing within TMAs should not adversely affect the local ranchers if the establishment of TMAs in the first place is based on criteria mentioned in #4 above.

- 6) Cover recommendations: Prohibiting large surface-disturbing projects in TMAs would require that TMAs not be established near existing canals such as CAP at Picacho Mountains.

Establishing TMAs in areas where there are no mineral explorations or where there is the least likelihood of minerals, or where there is no surface occupancy for oil, gas and geothermal leases or where there is the least likelihood of oil, gas, or geothermal sites would not have an adverse impact on local ranchers or farmers. Geological surveys should, therefore, be done before TMAs are established.

Restrictions on fire fighting activities in TMAs does not seem warranted. A few disturbed or injured tortoises would be preferable to many burned ones.

- 7) Spatial recommendations: Any acquisition of desert tortoise habitat should be done only after consideration of the impact the loss of farm land might have on the state in the future.
- 8) Other recommendations: Existing landfills will not be a problem if TMAs are not established closer than 15 miles from landfills.
- 9) Development of methodologies for management should not de-stabilize and increase pressures on local ranchers and farmers. If research demonstrates that the desert tortoise is not endangered and that it does not need a protected habitat, the land should be returned to full and unrestricted use by ranchers and farmers.

Sincerely,

Ivan J. Shields
Director

2

R.N. (Bob) Martin



P.O. Box 21 (9330 Avalon Road)
Phelan, California 92371
(619) 868-6606

June 15, 1990

Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 South Winsor Avenue
Yuma
Arizona 85365

Dear BLM:

Regarding your Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16 for Planning Amendment (1990). Not having the proposed amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan somewhat diminished my ability to adequately comment on the Assessment. Also the obscure manner of governmentteeze used doesn't help. Anyway the most obvious fault is that there is nothing addressing the loss of short term camping from the sale of BLM land in Quartzsite. That area is nearly always full to capacity during the Pow Wow. Just where do you expect these short term people to go? I would guess that the sold land will be quickly turned into pay camp grounds or parking lots during future Pow Wows despite what the local people have said about the current use! This sale without providing for similar close in limited time camping is unjust and high handed. I Vehemently object to this cavalier treatment of the public interest!

Sincerely:

2-1. Our data and analysis indicate that there would be no significant adverse impacts to short-term camping use from implementation of the preferred alternative (See the draft Environmental Assessment, pages 17 and 18).

3



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 8320 COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (TAC)
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, AZ 85309-5000

0704n

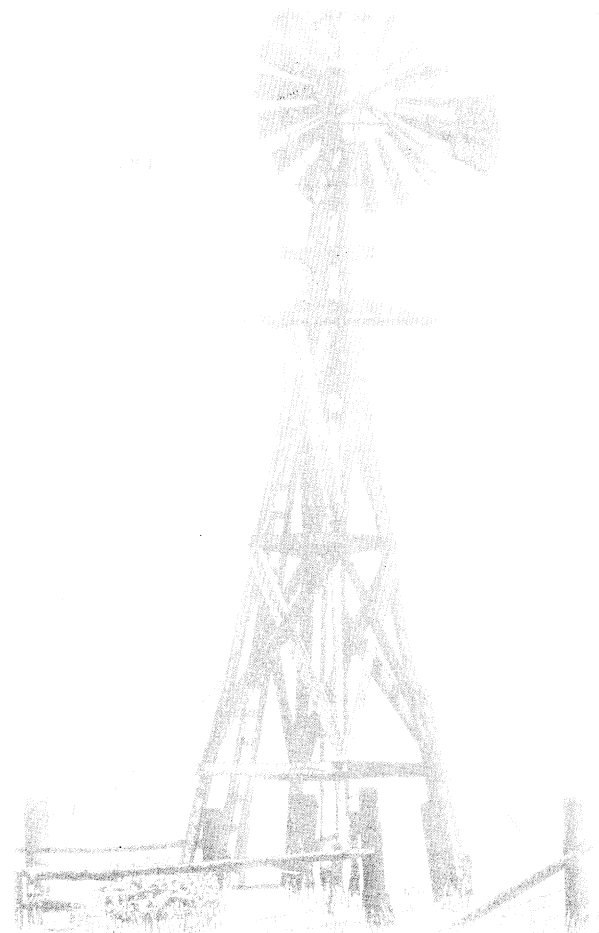
REPLY TO: 832 CSG/DEVN (Wade Eakle)
ATTN OF:
SUBJECT: Yuma District RMP Amendment and EA

TO: Maureen A. Merrell, Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

1. Reference Environmental Assessment (EA) AZ-050-0-16 for Planning Amendment (1990).
2. The Natural Resources Section of the Environmental Planning Branch at Luke Air Force Base (AFB) has reviewed the above referenced EA. Since the Proposed Action involves changes in general management guidance within the Yuma District, we have no comments to provide at this time.
3. The U.S. Air Force through Luke AFB manages military activities on the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range (AFR). The Goldwater AFR shares a common boundary with the Yuma District in Yuma County south of Interstate 8, and east of Yuma. We would be most concerned with any land use changes that might result in encroachments on the western and northern borders of the Goldwater AFR. This action does not appear to result in any such land use changes near our common boundaries.
4. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this EA. If you have any questions concerning our review, please contact Mr. Wade Eakle, Wildlife Biologist for the Goldwater AFR, at (602) 856-3621.

Dale C. Olson
DALE C. OLSON
Deputy Base Civil Engineer

Readiness is our Profession



4



NORTON CONSULTING

11411 S. Fortuna Rd. #205 Yuma, AZ 85365
(602) 342-6217

June 20, 1990

Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
Yuma District Office
Bureau of Land Management
3150 S. Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Re: Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16 for Planned
Amendment

Dear Ms Merrell:

Norton Consulting welcomes the opportunity to participate in
the process of review of subject environmental assessment.

We find only one area in which we have expertise that we may
comment on. Specifically Page 21, Paragraph IV, B, 10 -
"Economic Impacts"

The subject area is"Consequently, adverse economic
impacts from the acquisition of this land would be restricted
to minor losses in the tax bases of Mohave and La Paz
Counties -- which would be **partially offset** by corresponding
increases in Federal in-lieu-of-tax payments to the
counties."

4-1

A review of deeded lands in both counties at **11 percent** for
Mohave and **6 percent** in La Paz of the total land indicates
that neither can well afford to lose any more land to a
nontaxable status. This is especially true when the Planned
Amendment says "**partially offset**" by increases in Federal in-
lieu-of-tax payments. Not only would there be a drop in
County income there is the distinct possibility that the in-
lieu-of-tax payments could be further reduced in future
Federal Budget years.

4-2

It is recommended that the Planned Amendment be restructured
to provide - an assured amount of in-lieu-of-tax payments
equal to current income from property to be withdrawn as well

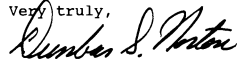
4-1. Our data show that the adverse effects of losses in the tax
bases of Mohave and La Paz Counties from acquiring lands along the Bill
Williams River would be insignificant (significance = +/- 10 percent
change). The 6,156 acres proposed for possible acquisition in Mohave
County is about 0.6 percent of the 935,000 total deeded acres, and the
1,611 acres in La Paz County represents about 0.9 percent of the deeded
lands (175,000 acres).

4-2. Action on this recommendation is beyond the scope of this plan
amendment.

4-2 | as agreement to increase as each County tax rate increases.
Without that "locked in" agreement it is recommended that the
lands not be withdrawn from deeded status.

Again thank you for including Norton Consulting in the review
process.

Very truly,



Dunbar S. Norton

cc: County Manager, Mohave County
County Manager, La Paz County

DSN/kmn

4-2. Action on this recommendation is beyond the scope of this plan
amendment.

5

GOLD FIELDS MINING CORPORATION
A Consolidated Gold Fields Group Company

Please reply to the address indicated.

X P. O. Box 329
1701 West Ninth Street
Yuma, Arizona 85364
Telephone (602) 782-1695

200 Union Boulevard--Suite 800
Lakewood, Colorado 80228
Telephone (303) 988-0360 Telex 45-653

Telecopier (303) 989-6786

June 20, 1990

Maureen A Merrell
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16

Position: Concerned

Dear Madam,

I have examined the Bureau's preliminary report. Several of the proposed actions are of concern to mining companies and Arizona citizens.

Item 1

5-1

The suggestion that the Buckskin Mts region be declared a Category II Tortoise habitat and that 42,880 acres be declared priority wildlife habitat is improper, since the Buckskin Mts and Swansea districts are known category I mining districts. The future conflict of a major copper producer and/or gold producer in the area is almost certain. Large historic mining areas are such as the Swansea, Planet and Mineral Hill mining areas are likely to become copper producers when the nations copper reserves around Phoenix and Tucson are used up. Gulf Resources drilled Copper Basin during the last decade looking for copper reserves. Amax drilled near Planet for gold reserves. In addition, the Pride mine and Standard mine are recent small scale gold mines. The Cienega Springs district is a well known high grade gold district. These cultural concerns are in direct conflict with a tortoise habitat in the area.

The Kofa Game reserve should provide adequate priority 2

5-1. Our management guidance for priority wildlife habitat does not restrict improvements required by the mining laws (Resource Management Plan, page 11). Therefore, managing Category II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas as priority wildlife habitat would not adversely affect potential mining operations in the Buckskin Mountains and Swansea Districts.

- 5-2 | tortoise habitat. Why are additional areas necessary? The Trigo Mountains are another area suitable for tortoise protection. There are unused portions of the Yuma Proving ground that provide excellent tortoise habitat.

Item 2

- 5-3 | I am unclear about the BLM's plans for the Imperial Dam LTVA. No map of the area for mineral withdrawal was given. My understanding is that there is active mining in the Potholes District and in the Laguna Mts. Most of the mining is done by the LTVS as a hobby. The vision of no claim laws and shootouts at Snowbird Corral comes to mind.

Item 3

- 5-4 | When the BLM proposes to deny oil and gas occupancy in specified riparian areas does that include pipeline right of ways and exploratory drilling? Usually oil pumps and gas pipe stands are incredibly clean and no more damaging than a gauging station. Why is the BLM so concerned?

Item 4

- 5-5 | What is the purpose of the acquisition of Radar Hill near Wellton? No rationale is given. Are we protecting the radar facility? Shouldn't the operator of the facility buy the land? A quick perusal of a culture map shows no wildlife, scenic or cultural values since the town, two railroad tracks, and the interstate are all within a mile and surround the site. Are there archaeological concerns?

Item 5

- 5-6 | Why is there no open house in Yuma to address our questions? I submit that few people live in Quartzite during the summer months and that the date of the meeting there should be changed to November.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas Chapin

Thomas Chapin

TC/llw

cc: A.P. Mogensen
J. Fitz-Gerald
C. Kennedy
5.1
6.6.4

5-2. We have categorized Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas in the Yuma District in compliance with the BLM Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangewide Plan (Draft Environmental Assessment, pages 1, 2).

5-3. The Imperial Dam Long Term Visitor Area is withdrawn for Bureau of Reclamation purposes (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 3).

The Long Term Visitor Area is shown on Map 8 in the Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. While this area includes portions of the Potholes District, it does not contain any active mining

5-4. Construction projects in pipeline rights-of-way can be approved after National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation is completed (Resource Management Plan, page 11). Exploratory drilling in riparian areas would be subject to no surface occupancy restrictions. The Environmental Assessment for Oil and Gas Leasing on Public Lands in the Yuma District addresses the impacts of exploration in riparian areas (BLM, 1987a, pages 22 - 25).

5-5. Lands on Wellton Mesa (i.e., the 10 acre tract near Radar Hill) would be acquired to benefit cultural resource values (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 10).

5-6. We did not schedule an open house in Yuma because local people who had concerns were encouraged to contact the District Office in the notices of the preparation and availability of the amendment published in the Federal Register and local newspapers. Local residents also received copies of the proposed plan amendment/draft Environmental Assessment for review and comment. An open house was held in Quartzsite because several of the issues in the amendment directly apply to Quartzsite (land disposals, La Posa Long Term Visitor Area withdrawal).

6



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO
THE COMMONS, BUILDING C, SUITE 310
4171 NORTH MESA
EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

Ms. Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Ms. Merrell:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft environmental assessment dated June 8, 1990, for the proposed amendment to the 1985 approved Yuma District Resource Management Plan (Reference: 1617.42 (050)).

The U.S. Section's review of the draft EA finds that the proposed action will have no apparent adverse impact on our projects or adverse impacts of an international nature.

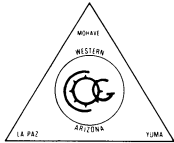
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Conrad G. Keyes, Jr.".

Conrad G. Keyes, Jr.
Principal Engineer, Planning

cc: A. Goff, Yuma





WESTERN ARIZONA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

AREA OFFICE
206 N. 4th Street
Kingman, Arizona 86401
(602) 753-6247

MAIN OFFICE
1100 S. Maple Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85364
(602) 782-1886

AREA OFFICE
1317 Joshua
Parker, Arizona 85344
(602) 669-9466

June 21, 1990

Maureen A. Merrell
U.S. Department of the Interior
BLM - Yuma District Office
3150 S. Windsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Ms. Merrell,

This agency has reviewed the draft copy of the environmental assessment Az-050-0-16 for planning ammendment (1990).

The proposed amendment would provide for: (1) no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases in riparian areas; (2) inclusion of 84,420 acres of desert tortoise habitat in priority wildlife habitat; (3) designation of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area; (4) retention of 2,560 acres of Federal land previously identified for disposal; (5) disposal of up to 3,635 acres of Federal land around the Town of Quartzsite and 10.45 acres of Federal land in the vicinity of the Town of Needles; (6) acquisition of up to 18,950 acres of State and private land; (7) withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area from mineral entry; (8) adjustments to District off-road vehicle designations through the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) activity planning process; and (9) authorization of competitive-use off-road vehicle events through BLM's special recreation use permit process.

WACOG offers the following response:

7-1 |

1. "Riparian Lands" needs to be more definitively defined to assure minimum interpretation. EG: 500 feet from the high water mark of ephemeral or perennial water ways.
2. No comment
3. The Bill Williams River and associated riparian habitat are unique. WACOG supports any efforts to maintain, enhance, and protect this riparian environment.
4. WACOG supports the disposal of land around Quartzsite, Arizona. This newly incorporated community needs additional land for parks, municipal facilities, etc. WACOG has assessed the disposal of these public lands to have minimal impacts environmentally.

Serving: Yuma County - Mohave County - La Paz County - Town of Parker - Town of Wellton - City of Somerton - City of San Luis - City of Yuma - City of Lake Havasu - City of Kingman - City of Bullhead - Town of Colorado City - Town of Quartzsite

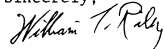
7-1. We have revised the text of this document to include the definition of "riparian area" contained in the glossary of the Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, 1985). The definition is as follows: "Riparian Area: A specialized form of wetland with characteristic vegetation restricted to areas along or adjacent to rivers and streams, also periodically, flooded lake and reservoir shore areas, as well as lakes with stable water levels."

Maureen Merrell
Page two

5. No comment
6. WACOG supports the action
7. No comment at this time.
8. No comment

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this document.

Sincerely,



William Riley
Planner

WTR/cen

8

Office of
Arizona State Mine Inspector

1616 West Adams, Suite 411
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-2627
(602) 542-5971



June 25, 1990

Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
BLM - Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

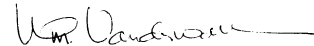
Re: 1617.42 (050)

Dear Ms. Merrell:

The Office of Arizona State Mine Inspector supports multiple use of Federal lands. Consequently, the Office is opposed to amendments #1,2,3,&7, Favors amendment #4 and expresses no opinion of the remaining amendments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



William C. Vanderwall
Assistant State Mine Inspector

WCV:krb

9



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
REGION NINE
ARIZONA DIVISION
234 N. Central Ave., Suite 330
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

ARIZONA
CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
HAWAII
GUAM
AMERICAN SAMOA
N. MARIANA IS.

June 29, 1990
IN REPLY REFER TO

HB-AZ
IR 10-1(74)
Yuma District Resource
Management Plan

Ms. Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Ms. Merrell:

We have reviewed the environmental assessment for a proposed amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan and have only one concern:

Map 2-3B shows Disposal Area D-18, which is very near the Quartzsite Traffic Interchanges on Interstate 10 in Arizona. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has proposed to improve both the East and West Interchanges by reconstruction and realignment of the ramps, crossroads and frontage roads. Although these improvements are currently scheduled beyond ADOT's Five-Year Program, your proposed disposal of lands in this vicinity could impact ADOT's right-of-way acquisition for this future interchange project.

We recommend that your agency coordinate the disposal of Area D-18 with ADOT; we have sent a copy of the assessment for their review.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the assessment at this early stage. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Ms. Sandra Hayes of this office.

Sincerely yours,

E. A. Wueste
E. A. Wueste
Division Administrator

9-1. Since Area D-18 is crossed by the right-of-way for Interstate Highway 10, the Arizona Department of Transportation would be notified in connection with the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act documentation necessary before any disposal actions could be approved.

10

MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

111 S. 3rd Avenue, Room 300, Phoenix, Arizona 85003



July 3, 1990

Maureen A. Merrell
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

RE: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE YUMA DISTRICT
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Ms. Merrell:

This Department appreciates the opportunity to review and comment upon the
Environmental Assessment for a proposed amendment to the Yuma District
Resource Management Plan.

We are always pleased to see efforts made toward the management and protection
of riparian lands and wilderness study areas. Your plans for the protection of
Desert Tortoise habitat areas are most commendable. We favor this amendment to
your Resource Management Plan.

If we may be of further assistance, please telephone our office at 262-3403.

Sincerely,

DENNIS W. ZWAGERMAN
DIRECTOR



Richard Turner
Assistant Director
(602) 262-3301

JAM/mlc

xc: Dennis W. Zwagerman, Director

11

YUMA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 6395
YUMA, ARIZONA 85366-6395

July 8, 1990

Herman Kast
District Manager
Yuma District Office
Bureau of Land Management
3150 South Windsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Herman:

Yuma Audubon submits the following comments in response to your request for public input on the Environmental Assessment for the planning amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Overall, there is much to praise in the proposed plan amendments. However, we do suggest some modifications in some of the amendments, with more detail below, and we most strongly urge BLM not to adopt Amendments 7 and 8, which concern ORV activity.

Amendment 1--No Surface Occupancy in Riparian Areas

We strongly support this amendment, but at the same time recommend that it be strengthened. Instead of just prohibiting surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration and development, riparian areas should be placed under a total mineral withdrawal. If you withdraw the La Posa LTVA, why not riparian areas, which are surely just as worthy of such protection? Placer operations in riparian areas would be extremely destructive to the plant and animal life and would cause considerable erosion.

The impact of a total withdrawal would be insignificant to mining. As you mention in regard to prohibiting surface occupancy, riparian areas are only 1% of the area of public lands in the Yuma District.

Amendment 2--Categorization of Desert Tortoise Habitat

Now that BLM has elevated its level of concern about the Desert Tortoise, it is time to amend the RMP to eliminate grazing of domestic animals from Category I and II tortoise habitat. One of the factors leading to listing of the Desert Tortoise in California is cattle grazing.

11-2 Continued cattle grazing in Category I and II Desert Tortoise habitat is inconsistent with the goals and criteria listed in

11-1. We did not consider a protective withdrawal for riparian areas because approximately 99 percent of these areas is withdrawn for Bureau of Reclamation purposes. We would reexamine this position if the Bureau of Reclamation withdrawals covering the riparian areas are revoked as a result of ongoing withdrawal review.

11-2. All of the Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are associated with ephemeral grazing use. In the two perennial-ephemeral allotments (Ganado and Muse), the Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are in the ephemeral portions. The other Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are in the three ephemeral grazing allotments (Crossman Peak, Planet, and Primrose).

Since ephemeral grazing is restricted to periods in which annual forage is abundant, it would have only negligible effect on native forage for the desert tortoise.

11-2 | Appendix A. For example, how does BLM propose to "protect existing tortoise habitat values" and "halt further decline in tortoise habitat values" in the presence of grazing cattle? How are cattle-tortoise conflicts resolvable?

11-3 | Desert Tortoise habitat (at least Category I and II) also should be withdrawn from mineral entry. Mining would be extremely detrimental to the tortoises.

Amendment 3--Designation of the Bill Williams
Riparian Management Area

11-4 | We support BLM's implementation of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan to expand the area, but the whole Bill Williams Riparian Management Area (RMA) should be under mineral withdrawal. If you can do it for the humans who temporarily occupy the La Posa Long-term Visitor Area, why not for one of the crown jewels (if not the crown jewel) of the Yuma District? This area is unique in western Arizona. There is no other. Protect it.

11-5 | In addition, vehicles (including ORVs) should be limited to designated, not existing, roads in the Bill Williams RMA. BLM's definition of "existing" is nebulous and such routes have still not been defined, five years after adoption of the Yuma District RMP.

11-6 | BLM's analysis of economic impacts of federal acquisition of lands for the Bill Williams RMA should be expanded. Right now, the City of Scottsdale is not required to pay any taxes to La Paz County. But the federal government is required to make payments in lieu of taxes on federal lands in a county to that county government. Thus, La Paz County would have a much more reliable source of revenue from the federal government than from the City of Scottsdale.

In addition, La Paz County would have a net gain in private land when the Bill Williams RMA BLM acquisitions and the Quartzsite BLM disposals are both taken into consideration. La Paz County can only gain revenue from the BLM proposed plan amendments.

Amendment 4--Adjustments in Lands Available for Disposal

11-7 | We object to any land exchange which would remove federal management from any area with federal or state listed or candidate species of plants and animals. For example, do any of the lands proposed for disposal in the Quartzsite area have Wiggins Cholla (*Quercus wigginsii*)? Such lands should be retained.

11-8 | We also note that disposal of lands in Area 18 will result in negative impacts on a broad range of wildlife. BLM should require that wildlife management be continued as part of the conditions of the land disposal. BLM also should ensure that construction will not take place in the flood plain and that the washes will not become concrete channels, as is occurring in the Tucson and

11-2. All of the Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are associated with ephemeral grazing use. In the two perennial-ephemeral allotments (Ganado and Muse), the Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are in the ephemeral portions. The other Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas are in the three ephemeral grazing allotments (Crossman Peak, Planet, and Primrose).

Since ephemeral grazing is restricted to periods in which annual forage is abundant, it would have only negligible effect on native forage for the desert tortoise.

11-3. Our management of mineral exploration and development under surface management regulations in 43 CFR 3809 is consistent with the Category Goals and Objectives for Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas in the BLM Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangeland Plan. Further, few mining operations are anticipated within Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas.

11-4. We did not consider withdrawal of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area from mineral entry because the management guidelines in the plan amendment and in the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan would protect the natural values.

11-5. Roads and trails in the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area would be inventoried in the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan. If the inventory reveals a need to limit off-highway vehicle use to designated roads and trails the classification would be changed in that plan. (This complies with the preferred action to alleviate conflicts between off-highway vehicle uses and other resources by adjusting designations (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 6)).

11-6. Our data indicate that the federal "payments in lieu of taxes" would be less than the Scottsdale "in lieu of tax" payments (cf: comment 15-1, supra). The amount, as a change in the proportion of the total La Paz County revenues, would not be significant (See response 4-1).

11-7. Specific land disposal actions would not be approved until National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation and the required clearances for threatened and endangered species and cultural resources were completed. The existence of threatened or endangered species on these lands could preclude their actual transfer (Draft Environmental Assessment, pages 8, 9)

11-8. The impacts of the disposal actions would be addressed in the associated National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation. We cannot impose management conditions on lands transferred out of federal ownership.

11-8 Phoenix areas.

11-9 We also object to BLM rewarding residential trespass by conceding such trespass through sale of lands in the Needles area. Do any of these lands front the Colorado River? Such lands are extremely valuable and should be retained for public access.

11-10 On the other hand, reduction of Disposal Area 8 to retain more lands for Desert Tortoise habitat is a good decision. But why dispose of any of the lands in Area D-8? What Desert Tortoise habitat category are parcels D-8A through D-8E in? And why dispose of parcel D-8B? This area seems to be much more isolated than the others and appears to us to be bordered on the north by federal land.

Amendment 5--Additions to Lands Identified for Acquisition

We most wholeheartedly support BLM's proposal to acquire lands within the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area. This river is unique in western Arizona, and is comparable to the famed Aravaipa Canyon, yet occurs in a much more arid place.

We also strongly support BLM's proposal to acquire lands for wilderness purposes in the Swansea and Crossman Peak Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). These areas both contain unique habitats and merit such attention.

We appreciate BLM's efforts to acquire private lands containing Category I and II Desert Tortoise habitat. We must act to protect the tortoise in Arizona before the situation deteriorates to the point that it has in the Mohave Desert.

The proposed acquisition in Milpitas Wash is well worth the effort. We have hiked, birded, and botanized this unique area and appreciate BLM's efforts to protect it.

The cultural resources of the Colorado River Valley and adjacent area are little-known and unique. It is good that BLM will acquire several areas for cultural resources. Acquisition of village sites is extremely important because they are so rare in the Colorado River Valley. Intaglios and ceremonial sites are needed to further understand the most spectacular manifestations of prehistoric human occupation in what is now the Yuma District. Trails are important in learning of contact between prehistoric groups. And all kinds of sites are needed to understand fully how the prehistoric cultures fit together, just as to complete a jigsaw puzzle all pieces are necessary, not just the prettiest or most spectacular ones.

We also agree with BLM's plan to acquire wildlife habitat along the Colorado River and in the Black Mountains, Aubrey Hills, and Chocolate Mountains.

11-11 We also ask that BLM add several other areas for acquisition.

11-8. The impacts of the disposal actions would be addressed in the associated National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation. We cannot impose management conditions on lands transferred out of federal ownership.

11-9. The residential trespasses result from federal survey errors and involve proprietary investments in facilities (i.e., septic tanks, driveways) for residences on adjacent private lands. Neither of these trespass parcels fronts the Colorado River. Approval for specific disposals by sale would be subject to the prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation.

11-10. The subject public lands in Disposal Area 8 meet Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 criteria for sales or exchanges (Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, page 268). Parcels D-8A through D-8E are in a Category III Desert Tortoise Habitat Area.

11-11. We have considered and rejected these lands as a possibility for acquisition. Our data suggest that potential development of non-federal lands on the La Posa Plain would not be inconsistent with federal land uses. Any significant impacts to soils and water from development would be subject to appropriate federal, State, and local environmental protection regulations. Significant impacts to visual resources would be negligible because these scattered parcels are in a Visual Resource Management Class III area.

11-11 These are: the private lands comprising Sec. 16, T. 1 N., R. 19 W.; the state lands comprising Secs. 2 and 16, T. 2 N., R. 19 W., and the private lands comprising portions of Secs. 20 and 21, T. 2 N., R. 19 W. Most of these lands border U.S. Highway 95 and could potentially be developed for uses inconsistent with the vast surrounding areas of undeveloped federal land. As an example, the S 1/2, Sec. 16, T. 1 N., R. 19 W. was proposed for a site to dump soils contaminated with gasoline and other substances from leaking storage tanks. This waste was going to be trucked in from Los Angeles and other metropolitan areas. Such a use would not only pollute the area's soil and water, but also would be an eyesore in a highly scenic area which includes the Kofa, Castle Dome, and New Water Mountains. Much of this area will be wilderness should the legislation before Congress pass the Senate.

The parcels mentioned above are surrounded by many square miles of federal land which is not proposed for disposal. We believe that consistent, rational land management and the need to protect an area bordering a National Wildlife Refuge and potential BLM and Fish & Wildlife Service wilderness argue for acquisition of these areas and hope that BLM will add this to the plan amendment.

Amendment 6--Withdrawal of the La Posa
Long-term Visitor Area (LTV6)

11-12 The main point we wish to make in regard to this amendment is that if BLM can put a mineral withdrawal on an area to benefit seasonal human visitors, how about mineral withdrawals for riparian areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and priority wildlife habitat, where the wildlife is always present? We ask BLM to include such withdrawals as part of the plan amendments and provide some real protection from mining for wildlife, rather than just changing the color on a map.

Amendment 7--Adjustments in ORV Designations
Amendment 8--Adjustments in Competitive-Use
ORV Area Designations

11-13 We strongly oppose Amendments 7 and 8, which will reduce opportunities for public input into changes in ORV use designations and authorization of competitive ORV events. Such changes should be part of the plan amendment process, as they are now, and not hidden in activity plans and special use permits. The fact is that BLM does not automatically send notice of applications for special use permits, environmental assessments, and various types of activity plans to the public. (These include Habitat Management Plans, Allotment Management Plans, Herd Management Plans, and Recreation Area Management Plans).

We know this to be true, because we have asked both verbally and in writing that BLM automatically send Yuma Audubon all environmental assessments and activity plans as they appear. This request was denied by a former Yuma District Manager. More recently, in spite of Yuma Audubon's long record of public input

11-11. We have considered and rejected these lands as a possibility for acquisition. Our data suggest that potential development of non-federal lands on the La Posa Plain would not be inconsistent with federal land uses. Any significant impacts to soils and water from development would be subject to appropriate federal, State, and local environmental protection regulations. Significant impacts to visual resources would be negligible because these scattered parcels are in a Visual Resource Management Class III area.

11-12. We considered withdrawals for priority wildlife habitat and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern thoroughly in the Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (page 36). Conditions have not changed enough since 1987 (Resource Management Plan approval) to reconsider withdrawal of these areas from mineral entry (see responses 11.1, 11.3, and 11.4).

11-13. Changing Off-Road Vehicle designations or authorizing competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle events outside designated areas are specific recreation management actions, not Resource Management Plan topics. These actions would be addressed in the development or revision of recreation activity plans. Approval of the actions would be subject to the prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation (Resource Management Plan, pages 3 and 9).

Our current public participation efforts exceed the minimum requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (43 CFR 1500 - 1508) and the BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR 1600 - 1610). In addition, we are developing a mailing list of people interested in reviewing planning and environmental documents. It would include the Yuma Resource Management Plan mailing list and would be used for activity-level plans and projects requiring environmental assessments as part of the National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation.

on Yuma District issues and our known interest in wildlife, wilderness, and riparian values, BLM never sent us a copy of the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan, nor the Laguna-Martinez Habitat Management Plan. We shouldn't have to request these documents--it should be automatic.

Burying changes in ORV designations in plans that the public never sees (or at best sees only highly selectively on BLM's part) and in effect concealing new competitive ORV events in special use permits will deny the public a voice in such proposed changes. Changes of this nature belong in plan amendments, which BLM apparently sends to all on the Yuma District RMP mailing list (EA, p. 25, B.2.), certainly one of the largest that the Yuma District must have.

We reiterate that we feel very strongly that proposed ORV designations and competitive ORV events belong in the public scrutiny. BLM knows well that ORV use is detrimental to the environment. Abundant examples appeared as long ago as 1983 in *Environmental Effects of Off-Road Vehicles* (Robert H. Webb and Howard G. Wilshire, eds., New York: Springer-Verlag). In this publication, one of the contributors, BLM employee Peter Rowlands states: "ORV recreation is therefore a highly consumptive use of rangelands which is not conducive to sustained-yield management" (p. 145).

Don't take away the public's only opportunity to oppose these destructive activities by removing ORV issues from the plan amendment process. These are serious decisions which have a significant effect on the environment. They should not be treated so lightly.

- 11-14 | We would also like to see BLM address whether any existing or proposed ORV use, competitive or non-competitive, is in Desert Tortoise habitat and how BLM proposes to prevent impacts to the tortoise from ORV activity.

Other Comments

- 11-15 | On p. 12, you should explain that the California Yellow-billed Cuckoo is listed as endangered by the State of California.

- 11-16 | Since this EA concerns all riparian habitat in the Yuma District, it should include analysis of effects on all federal or state listed species such as the Yuma Clapper Rail, Black Rail, Bell's Vireo, Summer Tanager, Willow Flycatcher, and Bald Eagle.

- 11-17 | While p. 12 refers to an Appendix E which lists threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, the Appendix E on p. 39 is something completely different. Please send us a copy of the Appendix E mentioned on p. 12.

- 11-18 | This EA fails to consider candidate species. It should do so.

11-14. The impacts of existing Off-Road Vehicle use were analyzed in the Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (pages 80 - 95) (BLM 1985a). Impacts to desert tortoise habitat from proposed changes in Off-Road Vehicle use are analyzed on a case-by-case basis in National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation for the activity and project plans in which these changes are proposed. In the preferred alternative Off-Road Vehicle use on Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas is limited to existing roads and trails.

11-15. The text has been changed.

11-16. Further analysis is unnecessary. We provide protection for threatened and endangered species (Resource Management Plan, page 6).

11-17. We have made an editorial change in the text. It now, correctly, cites "Appendix E of the Yuma Final Environmental Impact Statement/Resource Management Plan."

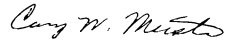
11-18. Candidate species are covered by the same General Management Guidance that protects listed threatened and endangered species (Resource Management Plan, page 6).

11-19

What visual resource class or classes have been given to the lands proposed for disposal in Areas 18 and 19? On p. 19, the 3645 acres are labeled all Class III, yet on p. 24 these same 3645 acres are labeled Class II and III. We do have concerns about BLM disposing of Class II areas and would like to know where they are, if that be the case.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed plan amendments.

Sincerely,



Cary W. Meister
Conservation Chairman

11-19. The figures on page 24 in the draft Environmental Assessment are in error, and are corrected in this final Environmental Assessment (refer to page 55). All 3,645 acres in Disposal Areas 18 and 19 are in Visual Resources Management Class III.

12

408 West Earll Drive 5
Phoenix, Arizona 85013
July 10, 1990

District Manager
Yuma District Office
Bureau of Land Management
3150 South Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are comments and suggestions on the Draft Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16 for a planning amendment to the Yuma Resource Management Plan (RMP).

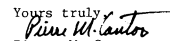
12-1 | In the future, it would be nice if the word DRAFT were not boldly plastered across the full text and illustration of every page of the document. Cannot this word not simply be stamped on one of the marginal selvages? It is very disconcerting for the reader to have to read through catawampus words emblazoned across normal left to right reading script.

12-2 | Maps 2-1A and 2-1B are nearly generic useless soup, unintelligible to the casual reader, for the reason that they contain no calls to familiar places, section, township or ranges, longitude or latitude, state plane coordinates or other features which the average lay person can find any objects depicted thereon. I have enclosed copies of the maps with suggested appended annotations to assist in the use and interpretation of these maps in the future. Particularly, it would be useful if the other included and adjoining administratively federally managed lands were indicated too. Boundaries of proposed BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) should be shown.

12-3 | The problem for the public land user is to try to discern what, if anything, will be left for him to use or visit in his recreational pursuits after all of these land segregations, classifications and withdrawals have been instituted. Not much, it appears the answer will be.

12-4 | I find it impossible to know or to understand from Appendix "A", page 27, how these three tortoise habitat classifications are going to restrict my use and access to BLM public lands. In informing the public on this issue the DEA is entirely mute and useless.

12-5 | It appears there will be a serious conflict for the need for public access from Hwy. 95 and west thereof to Havasu Lake in what you call the "Mohave Foothills/Bajada, Category II, T.15S16N., G&S.

Yours truly,

Pierre M. Cantou

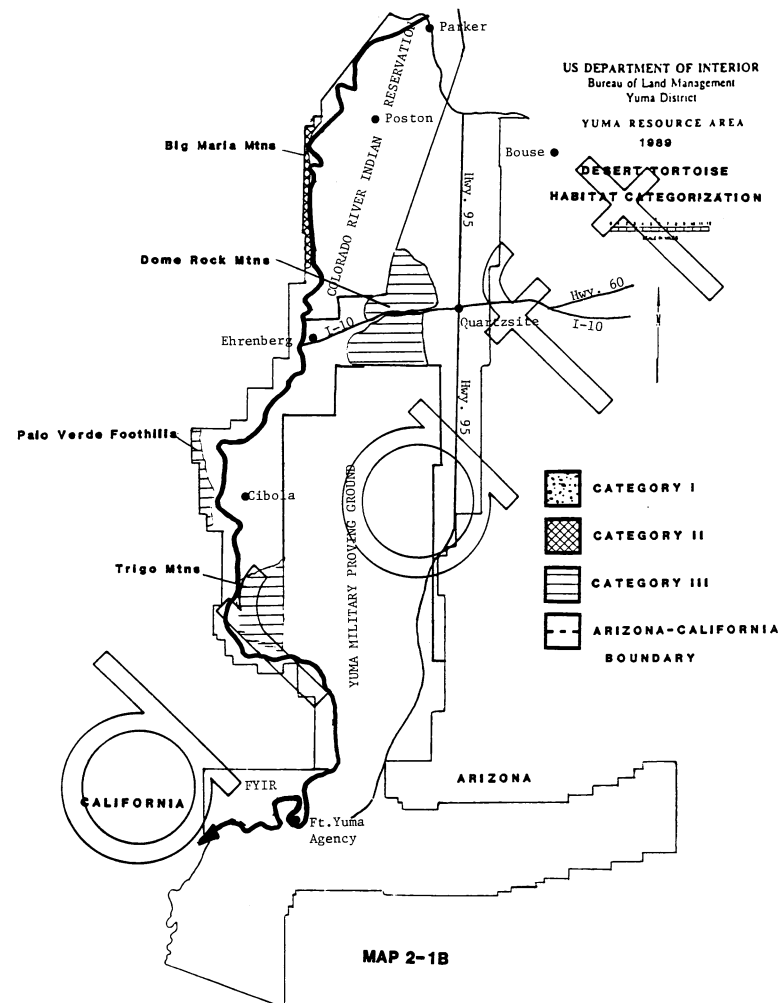
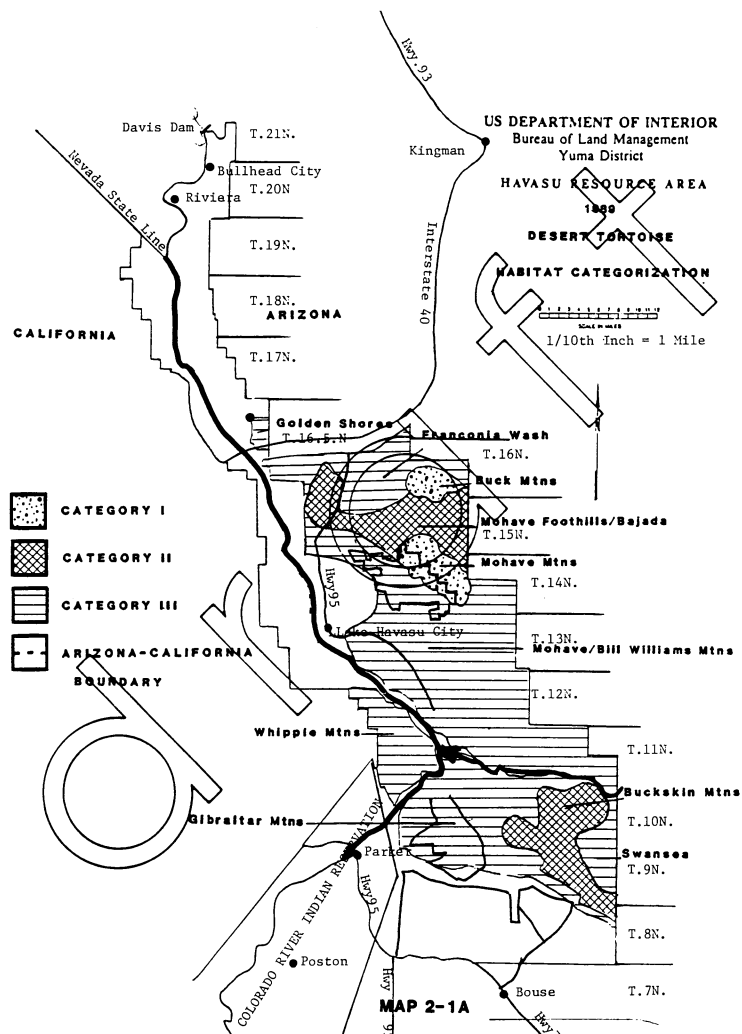
12-1. We appreciate your concern, and will consider your suggestion.

12-2. See response to Comment 12.1. Maps 2-1A and 2-1B are rough, but the intent was to use them in connection with the detailed maps in the Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement.

12-3. Impacts to recreation resources from the proposed plan amendment are addressed on pages 17 and 18 in the draft Environmental Assessment.

12-4. We would meet the "Goals and Criteria" in Appendix A by applying our priority wildlife habitat management guidelines to Category I and II Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas (Resource Management Plan, page 11). Under these guidelines we prohibit public use of utility access roads, limit Off-Road Vehicle use to existing roads and trails, and apply various other restrictions for resource protection.

12-5. Including the "Mohave Foothills/Bajada" area in priority wildlife habitat would not affect access. Off-Road Vehicle use would remain limited to existing roads and trails under the management guidelines for priority wildlife habitat.



13



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF MINES
INTERMOUNTAIN FIELD OPERATIONS CENTER
P.O. BOX 25086
BUILDING 20, DENVER FEDERAL CENTER
DENVER, COLORADO 80225



July 10, 1990

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Yuma
District Office, 3150 Winsor Avenue, Yuma, Arizona
85365

From: Chief, Intermountain Field Operations Center

Subject: Review of Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16 for
Planning Amendment (1990) for a proposed amendment
to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan

As requested, personnel of the Intermountain Field Operations Center reviewed the Environmental Assessment for Planning Amendment to determine whether mineral resources are adequately considered in the proposed amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Mineral resources and lode and placer claims affected by the amendment are adequately described. Probable impacts to mineral resources as a result of implementing either the proposed amendment or no action also are adequately discussed. Therefore, we have no objection to the document as written.

W. R. Cochran
for William Cochran



14

2120 N Callow Ave
Bremerton, WA 98312-2908
July 11, 1990

Yuma District Office
3150 S Winsor Ave
Yuma, AZ 85365

Dear Sir

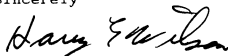
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment (AZ-050-0-16) for Planning Amendment (1990) for the Yuma District.

14-1 | On page 4, what is the number of long term camping permits for La Posa?

14-2 | Page 5, para 8, it states that RMP presently limits competitive use ORV events to Parker 400 course and Ehrenberg Sand Bowl. On page 10, para 2, subpara b, it states that the Parker 400 course will be the only designated competitive use ORV area in the District, which I support whole heartedly. Has any other area been looked at for competitive use?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely



Harry E Wilson
2120 N Callow Ave
Bremerton, WA 98312-2908

14-1. The number of long-term camping permits issued for the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area is as follows:

<u>Season</u>	<u>Number of Permits</u>
1986-1987	1,661
1987-1988	2,440
1988-1989	2,643

14-2. While the preferred alternative identifies the Parker 400 course as the only designated competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle area in the District, it allows other areas to be considered for competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle events through the Special Recreation Use Permit process (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 7). Approval for the use of any specific area is subject to the prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation.

MOHAVE COUNTY BOARD of SUPERVISORS

P.O. BOX 390 KINGMAN, ARIZONA 86402
Phone 753-0729 FAX 753-0732



Dist. 1 W.J. Roper	Dist. 2 Ron Bernstein	Dist. 3 Jerry A. Holt	Dist. 4 Lois J. Hubbard	Dist. 5 Becky Foster
County Manager David J. Grisez				Clerk of the Board Pat Chastain

July 13, 1990

Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

RE: Amendment to Yuma District Resource Management Plan

Dear Ms. Merrell:

I have just completed my review of the draft Environmental Assessment for the subject plan. I apologize for not responding sooner but for some reason your letter was referred to the Park's office rather than the Board of Supervisors.

While Mohave County does not have any environmental concerns relative to the plan other than those discussed in it, we do have a concern with the acquisition of additional land in Mohave County by the BLM or any Federal or State agency.

In this case I believe the intention is to acquire 11,380 acres of land in Mohave County. The largest portion appears to be the Planet Ranch owned by the City of Scottsdale for water farming purposes.

Mohave County will object to any further acquisition which will affect our economic future. Furthermore, we are concerned about the issue of water farming. Any action taken to modify the Planet Ranch allocation, which is already a "bitter pill" we have had to swallow, will be taken as a major concern to our economic future.

15-1. Approval for the acquisition of any specific parcel is subject to the prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation. Acquisition of the subject property would likely involve the completion of an environmental assessment in which alternatives and impacts would be thoroughly considered.


Letter
07-13-90
Page Two

15-1

Please be advised Mohave County does collect taxes on the Planet Ranch, in the form of in lieu payments from the City of Scottsdale. In 1989 we collected \$10,219.62. We expect that amount to rise over the years and it is considerably larger than the 10 cents/acre in lieu payment received from the Federal Government. Our current in lieu payment has neared the maximum and we can not reasonably expect the cap to be raised.

Once again please be advised Mohave County will object to the acquisition of any additional land by any Federal agency without an equal release within our borders.

Yours truly,


David J. Grisez, P.E.
County Manager

DJG/bab

15-1. Approval for the acquisition of any specific parcel is subject to the prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation. Acquisition of the subject property would likely involve the completion of an environmental assessment in which alternatives and impacts would be thoroughly considered.

16



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
U.S. MARINE CORPS AIR STATION
YUMA, ARIZONA 85369-5001

IN REPLY REFER TO:
11000
3AQ

Ms. Maureen A. Merrell
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

Dear Ms. Merrell,

This is in response to your June 8, 1990 letter requesting that we review the environmental assessment for a proposed amendment to the Yuma District Management Plan.

The assessment has been reviewed by my Environmental Section. It will have no significant impact on environmental concerns of the Marine Corps on the Barry M. Goldwater Range or the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

F. M. LUCKIE
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer

17



ROSE MOFFORD
GOVERNOR

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
3800 NORTH CENTRAL AVENUE SUITE 1400
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85012
(602) 280-1300
FAX: (602) 280-1305

DONALD E. CLINE
DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO : DOI BLM
FROM : ARIZONA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE
DATE : July 13, 1990
RE : BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EA YUMA DIST RMP 15.999
AZ900608800022

This memorandum is in response to the above project submitted to the Arizona State Clearinghouse for review.

The project has been reviewed pursuant to the Executive Order 12372 by certain Arizona State officials and Regional Councils of Government.

If the Standard Form 424 was submitted with the application, it is attached for your information.

No comments were received on this project. It was supported as written. If any comments are received we will forward them to you for your consideration.

Attachment

cc: Arizona State Clearinghouse
Applicant

18



GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR

State of California
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH
1400 TENTH STREET
SACRAMENTO 95814

(916) 323-7480

DATE: July 17, 1990

TO: U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
ATTN: Mr. Jim Atkins
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

FROM: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse

RE: Environmental Assessment, AZ-050-0-16 for Proposed Planning
Amendment (1990), Yuma District Resource Management Plan, San
Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial Counties (SCH 90040083)

As the designated California Single Point of Contact, pursuant to Executive
Order 12372, the Office of Planning and Research transmits attached comments
as the State Process Recommendation.

This recommendation is a consensus; no opposing comments have been received.
Initiation of the "accommodate or explain" response by your agency is,
therefore, in effect.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Martinez
Director

Attachment

cc: Applicant

Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street
95814
(916) 445-5656
TDD (916) 324-0804

California Conservation Corps
Department of Boating and Waterways
Department of Conservation
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Forestry
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Water Resources

GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR OF
CALIFORNIA



THE RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Air Resources Board
California Coastal Commission
California Fish and Game Conservancy
California Waste Management
Board
Colorado River Board
Energy Resources Conservation
and Development Commission
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission
State Coastal Conservancy
State Lands Division
State Reclamation Board
State Water Resources Control
Board
Regional Water Quality
Control Boards

U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
ATTN: Mr. Jim Atkins
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

July 16, 1990

Dear Mr. Atkins:

The State has reviewed the Environmental Assessment, AZ-050-0-16
for Proposed Planning Amendment (1990), Yuma District Resource
Management Plan, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties
submitted through the Office of Planning and Research.

We coordinated review of this document with the State Lands
Commission, Colorado River Board, Colorado River Basin Regional
Water Quality Control Board, and the Departments of Conservation,
Fish and Game, Food and Agriculture, Parks and Recreation, and
Transportation.

The Department of Transportation has provided the attached
comments for your consideration.

Thank you for providing an opportunity to review this project.

Sincerely,

for Gordon F. Snow, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Resources

Attachment

cc: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(SCH 90040083)

19



THE STATE OF ARIZONA

GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT

2221 West Greenway Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85023-4312 (602) 942-3000

Governor
 Rose McLeod
Commissioners:
 Thomas G. Woods, Jr., Phoenix, Chairman
 Phillip W. Ashcroft, Eagar
 Gordon K. Whiting, Klondyke
 Larry Taylor, Yuma
 Elizabeth T. Woodin, Tucson
Director
 Duane L. Shroule
Deputy Director
 Thomas W. Spalding

July 17, 1990

Mr. Herman Kast, District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 Yuma District Office
 3150 Winsor Ave.
 Yuma, Arizona 95365

Dear Mr. Kast:

Re: Amendment to Yuma District Resource Management Plan

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has reviewed the Bureau of Land Management's Amendment to the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (RMP) included with your letter of June 5, 1990, and we submit the following comments.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Department is concerned about the approach proposed for modification of off-road vehicle (ORV) designations. We cannot support competitive ORV events beyond the scope established in the original RMP.

The Department is also concerned about the process used to identify lands for disposal.

We note that the RMP Amendment includes acquisitions of wildlife habitat, which we support.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS BY PAGE

SUMMARY, PARAGRAPH 3

19-1

We cannot concur that the only adverse impacts would be from the transfer of lands out of federal ownership. Changes in competitive ORV use could potentially result in significant adverse impacts to wildlife and cultural resources.

Page 1, paragraph 5

19-2

The Department endorses the concept of prohibiting surface occupancy for oil and gas exploration in riparian areas. We are concerned about the width of the corridor which would be protected by this designation along the river courses. We

An Equal Opportunity Agency

19-1. We cannot foresee where or how many competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle event proposals there might be. Therefore, we cannot assess impacts in this document. However, proposals for competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle events that would not use the Parker 400 course would require the completion of National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation before they could be approved. The National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation would examine site-specific impacts and appropriate required mitigation (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 7).

19-2. Provisions for no surface occupancy for oil and gas operations in riparian areas would be determined on a case-by-case basis during the review of individual oil and gas exploration and development proposals. Also, see response to Comment 7.1.

19-2

suggest that either the lateral extent of such a restriction be defined in the document or a buffer zone adjacent to the riparian zone be included to ensure that the restriction can be applied in protecting the riparian areas without ambiguity.

Page 2, paragraph 8

19-3

How did the Bureau "...identified(y) a need to dispose of public lands in the Yuma District."? Was the determination made in a public process with opportunity for input by a broad spectrum of interests?

Page 5, paragraph 3

19-4

If changes in ORV designations are made in activity plans, will the public have the same opportunity for input and review afforded by establishing the designations in the RMP and its amendments?

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission established a policy, effective December 4, 1987, entitled "Access To And Upon Public And State Trust Lands" which states, in part, that:

"It is the policy of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to place high priority on preserving existing access to public and state trust lands for hunting and fishing, and to place high priority on improving access to such land in areas of the state where access is currently difficult or nonexistent."

Access is an important issue, especially considering the potential impact of wilderness designation on recreation in remote areas. Much of the recreation which takes place in the desert is vehicle-based, since it is very difficult to carry enough water without using a vehicle.

Page 5, paragraph 6

19-5

The issue of competitive-use ORV areas is unclear. Is the Bureau considering expanding existing areas or adding other areas? The referenced paragraph in part states:

"... a plan amendment is needed to accommodate competitive-use ORV events in additional areas."

while the following statement appears on page 10:

"The Parker 400 course will be the only designated competitive-use ORV area in the District."

19-6

It was our understanding when the original RMP was developed that the intent was to limit competitive ORV events to the Parker 400 course. If the Bureau is now planning to accommodate competitive ORV events in additional areas, this would constitute a major

19-2. Provisions for no surface occupancy for oil and gas operations in riparian areas would be determined on a case-by-case basis during the review of individual oil and gas exploration and development proposals. Also, see response to Comment 7.1.

19-3. The "need to dispose of public lands in the Yuma District" was identified by management and through public contacts in Quartzsite and Needles in accord with National Environmental Policy Act and BLM planning procedures.

19-4. See response 11-13.

19-5. In the existing Resource Management Plan, two competitive use areas are designated: The Parker 400 course and the Ehrenburg Sand Bowl. The preferred alternative would eliminate the Ehrenburg Sand Bowl designation. Editorial revisions in this final Environmental Assessment clarify this point ("The last paragraph in the section on Off-Road Vehicle Use on page 17 would be deleted and replaced with the following: 'The Parker 400 course would be the only designated competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle area in the District'" II.A.2.c.2.b.).

19-6. The Resource Management Plan does not limit competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle events to the Parker 400 course. It designated the Parker 400 race course as a competitive-use area (Resource Management Plan, pages 2, 17). Also, see response 19-1.

July 17, 1990

19-6 | deviation from the original document. Impacts from permitting additional events could be as great or greater than reusing the existing Parker 400 course. Such an accommodation would seem to reduce the effectiveness of the RMP as a planning document.

We request clarification of the competitive-use ORV issue.

Page 6, paragraph 1

19-7 | It is unclear what the "... Changes in general management guidance for the District's Range...program." would be from reviewing the subject document.

We note discussion of range issues under "Environmental Consequences, A. General Impact" on page 15 and again on page 17 under "Impacts from the Proposed Action", but the changes to range management from status quo are not clear.

Page 6, paragraph 6

19-8 | As mentioned under page 5, paragraph 3, we are concerned about the opportunity for public input if ORV designations are adjusted under activity plans, which is provided by establishment of the designations in the RMP and its amendments.

Page 7, paragraph 1

19-9 | Again, allowing competitive ORV events other than on the Parker 400 course, appears to be a significant change from the management direction established in the original RMP.

Page 8, paragraph 2

19-10 | Since mitigation is often ineffective or marginally effective in replacing lost riparian values, we suggest that the section on allowable uses within the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area be changed to define allowable uses as those which would result in no net loss of riparian habitat.

Page 8, paragraph 5

In general, disposal of land through exchange rather than through sale would seem to be a preferable approach since it allows more options to acquire desirable land for the enhancement of wildlife and other programs on a broad scale.

Page 15, paragraph 7

19-11 | Has the "special ephemeral rule published in the Federal Register on December 7, 1968" been subjected to evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act? We question whether use of the "ephemeral rule" is not a continuing action under NEPA and therefore, subject to review.

19-6. The Resource Management Plan does not limit competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle events to the Parker 400 course. It designated the Parker 400 race course as a competitive-use area (Resource Management Plan, pages 2, 17). Also, see response 19-1.

19-7. The referenced paragraph is in error. The Final Environmental Assessment has been corrected (refer to page 14).

19-8. See response 11-13.

19-9. See response 19-6.

19-10. We are reluctant to make a general assumption that mitigation measures would be ineffective. Since approval of allowable uses in the Bill Williams Riparian Management Area would be subject to prior completion of National Environmental Policy Act documentation, we would continue to evaluate mitigation measures on a case-by-case basis.

19-11. This issue is beyond the scope of the plan amendment. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) was signed into law on January 1, 1970.

July 17, 1990

Page 20, Impacts on Wildlife

19-12

This section should address impacts on wildlife from changes in ORV designations, particularly changes in competitive-use ORV areas. We believe this is a significant and serious omission.

Page 20, paragraph 7

After plotting Disposal Area D-18 on the Quartzsite 15 minute topographic map, we note that Tyson Wash runs through Section 21, Township 4 North, Range 19 West. In this area, Tyson Wash is a major watercourse which collects runoff from a large portion of the La Posa Plain and the western side of the Kofa Mountains. The wash supports a desert riparian vegetation community typical of major desert washes.

How has the Bureau addressed Executive Order 11988, dated May 24, 1977 entitled "Floodplain Management"? This Order states, in part, that:

19-13

"Section 1. Each agency shall provide leadership and shall take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains in carrying out its responsibilities for (1) acquiring, managing, and disposing of Federal lands and facilities..."

Page 25

19-14

We note that the Arizona Game and Fish Department was not included in the scoping phase for this document. We would have preferred the opportunity for input during the scoping phase.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the subject RMP Amendment.

Sincerely,



David L. Walker
Habitat Evaluation Coordinator
Habitat Branch

DLW:WEW:lk1

cc: Larry Voyles, Supervisor, Yuma Regional Office

19-12. Impacts on wildlife habitat from changes in Off-Road Vehicle designations were not considered in this section because we cannot analyze impacts until we know the parameters for specific projects. Until we receive an application for a competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle event, we cannot speculate about its impacts. After we receive a proposal for a competitive-use Off-Road Vehicle event we would complete the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation before we approve the proposal. The National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation would examine site-specific impacts and appropriate required mitigation (Draft Environmental Assessment, page 7).

19-13. Floodplain management on lands in Disposal Areas 18 and 19 would be subject to the Executive Order 11988 provisions contained in the District Floodplain Protection Program, and would be applied on a case-by-case basis in the individual environmental assessments for land disposals within these areas (Resource Management Plan, page 9)

19-14. A Notice of Intent, summarizing the amendment, inviting comments and requesting information on issues and concerns from other agencies and the public, and identifying contacts, was published in the Federal Register on July 18, 1989. A second Notice of Intent was published on August 25, 1989. We also send letters advising other agencies of the preparation of an Resource Management Plan Amendment.

20



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
3616 W. Thomas, Suite 6
Phoenix, Arizona 85019

July 17, 1990

MEMORANDUM

TO: Acting District Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Yuma District
Office, Yuma, Arizona

FROM: Field Supervisor

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment for a Proposed Amendment to the Yuma
District Resource Management Plan (RMP)

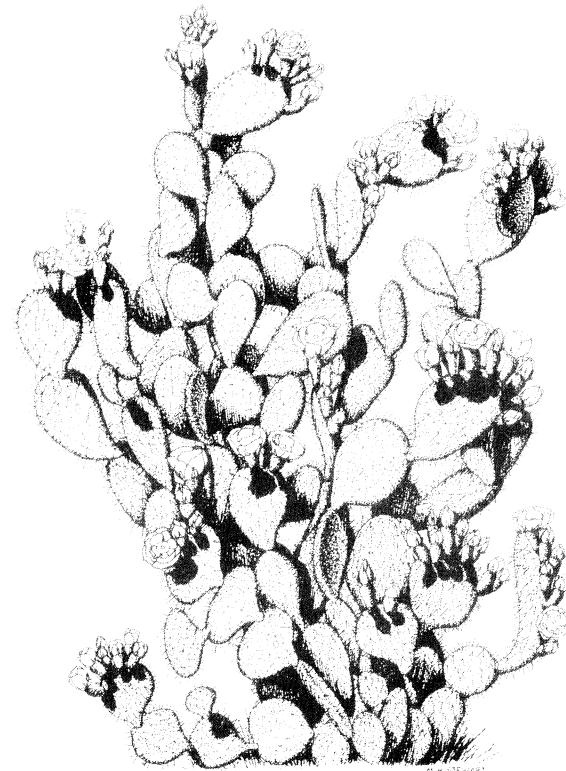
We have reviewed the subject document and have the following comments:

Most of the proposed amendments will provide a beneficial affect on
wildlife resources in your district. We are particularly encouraged by
the protection these amendments will provide to riparian areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in your planning process.

Sam F. Spiller

cc: Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Albuquerque, New Mexico
(FWE/HC)
Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix, Arizona



COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

107 SOUTH BROADWAY, ROOM 8103
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 620-4480



July 24, 1990

Mr. Jim Atkins
Yuma District Office
Bureau of Land Management
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85365

Dear Mr. Atkins:

We have reviewed your draft report entitled "Environmental Assessment AZ-050-0-16 For Planning Amendment (1:90)" regarding the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (RMP) and offer the following for your consideration. The report was submitted to us through the California Department of Water Resources.

Our concerns pertain to water use that may have an impact on amending your RMP to provide for :

- (1) no surface occupancy on oil and gas leases in riparian areas (covering a total of approximately 23,100 acres scattered along the Colorado River, Gila River, etc.),
- (2) withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Vistor Area (LTVa),
- (3) land ownership adjustments; such as adjustments in Federal lands available for disposal through sale or exchange, additions to lands identified for acquisition of private land through purchase or exchanging of Federal land.

In order for Colorado River water, including underground pumping from aquifers in hydraulic continuity with the Colorado River, to be used on any land owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), it must have a present perfected right (PPR) or other rights recognized under Arizona v. California. In addition, a contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) would be required under the Boulder Canyon Project Act. We have no record, for example, that the two parcels of Federal land located north of the City of Needles (covering approximately 10.45 acres and being identified as Disposal Areas D-19A and D-19B as shown on report Map 2-3C) in San Bernardino County have a PPR or other recognized rights to use Colorado River water. In case of disposing of Federal lands, the new owner should be advised that the sale or the exchange of land ownership does not include water rights for using Colorado River water. Water for non-agricultural use along the Colorado River in California, including recreation uses on BLM's

21-1. The Resource Management Plan does not authorize the transfer of water rights in land exchange actions.

21-2. The specific conditions associated with land disposal decisions (such as the presence or absence of water rights) are beyond the scope of this plan amendment. Such conditions would be analyzed in the National Environmental Policy Act compliance documentation that would be completed before any specific disposal decisions would be approved.

Jim Atkins
July 24, 1990
Page 2

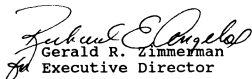
oil and gas lease riparian areas and mining and minerals development in the LTVA area, may be available through the 1986 Lower Colorado Water Supply Act. New owners and others seeking information on this water supply option for non-agricultural use may wish to contact the USBR's Lower Colorado Regional Office in Boulder City, Nevada, Contracts and Repayment Branch (Mr. Legrand Nielson), at Telephone No. 702-293-8536.

21-3

According to recently completed Colorado River Floodway boundary maps, the Disposal Area D-19A land is located adjacent to the Colorado River and possibly within the designated boundaries of the Floodway or the Floodway Fringe. The future use or development of this parcel will be subject to certain restrictions. The Floodway boundary maps have been prepared by the USBR and are available for public review and comment. Specific information on the Floodway boundaries for this particular reach of river may be obtained from Mr. Robert Brose of the USBR at 702-293-8520.

If we can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to call us.

Sincerely,


Gerald R. Zimmerman
Executive Director

cc: Nadell Gayou
California Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 215-4
Sacramento, CA 95814

Edward M. Hallenback, Regional Director
Lower Colorado Regional Office
U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
P. O. Box 427
Boulder City, Nevada 89005

21-3. See response 19-13.

22



GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR

State of California
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH
1400 TENTH STREET
SACRAMENTO 95814

(916) 323-7480

DATE: July 30, 1990
TO: U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
ATTN: Mr. Jim Atkins
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365
FROM: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
RE: Environmental Assessment, AZ-050-0-16 for Proposed Planning
Amendment (1990), Yuma District Resource Management Plan,
San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties
(SCH 90040083)

As the designated California Single Point of Contact, pursuant to Executive
Order 12372, the Office of Planning and Research transmits attached comments
as the State Process Recommendation.

This recommendation is a consensus; no opposing comments have been received.
Initiation of the "accommodate or explain" response by your agency is,
therefore, in effect.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Martinez
Director

Attachment

cc: Applicant

Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street
95814
(916) 445-5656
TDD (916) 324-0804

California Conservation Corps
Department of Boating and Waterways
Department of Conservation
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Forestry
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Water Resources

GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN
GOVERNOR OF
CALIFORNIA



THE RESOURCES AGENCY OF CALIFORNIA
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Air Resources Board
California Coastal Commission
California Tahoe Conservancy
California Waste Management
Board
Colorado River Board
Energy Resources Conservation
And Development Commission
San Francisco Bay Conservation
and Development Commission
State Coastal Conservancy
State Lands Division
State Reclamation Board
State Water Resources Control
Board
Regional Water Quality
Control Boards

U. S. Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District Office
ATTN: Mr. Jim Atkins
3150 Winsor Avenue
Yuma, AZ 85365

July 30, 1990

Dear Mr. Atkins:

The State submitted comments on the Environmental Assessment,
AZ-050-0-16 for Proposed Planning Amendment (1990), Yuma District
Resource Management Plan, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial
Counties on July 16, 1990.

Since that time we received the attached comments from the
Department of Fish and Game. These comments are being forwarded
for your consideration.

Thank you for your additional attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

for Gordon F. Snow, Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Resources

Attachment

cc: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(SCH 90040083)

Memorandum

To : The Honorable Gordon K. Van Vleck
Secretary for Resources
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Date : July 25, 1990

Attention Gordon F. Snow, Ph.D.
Projects Coordinator

From : Department of Fish and Game

Subject : Draft Environmental Assessment, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Yuma District Resource Management Plan, Proposed Amendments,
Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, SCH 90040083

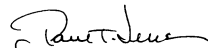
We find the document contains proposals which are generally
beneficial to the fish and wildlife resources of California.

We are strongly supportive of the proposed amendment to add
79,140 acres (seven percent of the public land in the District) of
Category I and Category II Desert Tortoise areas to the priority
wildlife habitat which will provide long-term wildlife benefits by
protecting existing conditions. However, to add additional
strength to this proposal, we recommend that all numerically
categorized desert tortoise habitat areas be dedicated for the
sole purpose of supporting desert tortoise and any other native
wildlife and plants that benefit this species or benefit from its
protection. Reference to numerically categorized Desert Tortoise
Habitat Areas is based upon definitions presented on page 26 of
the July 1988 BLM report entitled "Recommendations for Management
of the Desert Tortoise in the California Desert".

Certain of the land acquisition proposals, if accomplished, could
lead to improved conditions for both game and nongame species of
wildlife along the Colorado River. We plan to meet with BLM
representatives August 1, 1990 and will discuss further how our
two agencies can coordinate efforts to achieve this improvement.

Of specific interest to us is a proposal to acquire a parcel of
land adjacent to the Colorado River near the Cibola National
Wildlife Refuge. This parcel contains high potential for riparian
and wetland habitat improvement. Overall, we believe the proposed
amendments will be beneficial, and we recommend that they be
supported.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this
project. If you have any questions, please contact
Mr. Fred Worthley, Regional Manager of Region 5, at 330 Golden
Shore, Suite 50, Long Beach, CA 90802, or by telephone at (213)
590-5113.


Pete Bontadelli
Director

22-1. We appreciate and will consider your recommendation.

22-1

REFERENCES

USDI, Bureau of Land Management. 1985. *Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*. Arizona State Office, Phoenix, Arizona. 310 pages.

_____. 1987a. *Environmental Assessment for Oil and Gas Leasing on Public Lands in the Yuma District*. Yuma District Office, Yuma, Arizona. 40 pages.

_____. 1987b. *Draft Recreation Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Laguna-Martinez Special Recreation Management Area*. Yuma District Office, Yuma, Arizona. 31 pages.

_____. 1988. *Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangewide Plan*, Division of Wildlife and Fisheries, Washington, D.C. 23 pages.

_____. 1989a. Mineral Potential Report for the Proposed Mineral Withdrawal of the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area. Unpublished. Yuma District Office, Yuma, Arizona. 23 pages.

_____. 1989b. *Status of the Desert Tortoise in the Yuma District*. Yuma District Office, Yuma, Arizona. 40 pages.

_____. 1989c. *Bill Williams Riparian Management Area Plan*, Yuma District Office and Phoenix District Office. 32 pages.

_____. 1989d. *Final Yuma District Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement*, Arizona State Office, Phoenix, Arizona. 566 pages.

APPENDIX A

GOALS AND CRITERIA FOR THREE CATEGORIES OF DESERT TORTOISE HABITAT AREAS

Items	Category I Habitat Areas	Category II Habitat Areas	Category III Habitat Areas
Category Goals	Maintain stable, viable populations, and protect existing tortoise habitat values; increase populations where possible.	Maintain stable, viable populations, and halt further declines in tortoise habitat values.	Limit tortoise habitat and population decline to the extent possible by mitigating impacts.
Criterion 1	Habitat area essential to maintenance of large, viable populations.	Habitat area may be essential to maintenance of viable populations.	Habitat area not essential to maintenance of viable populations.
Criterion 2	Conflicts resolvable.	Most conflicts resolvable.	Most conflicts not resolvable.
Criterion 3	Medium to high density or low density contiguous with medium or high density.	Medium to high density or low density contiguous with medium or high density.	Low to medium density not contiguous with medium or high density.
Criterion 4	Increasing, stable, or decreasing population.	Stable or decreasing population.	Stable or decreasing population.

Note: The criteria are ranked by importance to the categorization process, with Criterion 1 being the most important.

Source: *Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on the Public Lands: A Rangewide Plan* (BLM 1988).

APPENDIX B

DISPOSAL AREAS

Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment

Disposal Area 8 (Adjusted)

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 15 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 2, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;

sec. 4, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;

sec. 6, lots 1 to 6, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $E\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 8, all;

sec. 10, all.

Total = 3,145.50 acres

Disposal Area 18

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 4 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 4, $SE\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 9, all;

sec. 15, all;

sec. 17, all;

sec. 20, all;

sec. 21, $W\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $N\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $E\frac{1}{2}SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 22, $E\frac{1}{2}$, $E\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 23, $N\frac{1}{2}$, $N\frac{1}{2}S\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $NW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $N\frac{1}{2}SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $N\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$, $N\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$, $N\frac{1}{2}SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$, $E\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $W\frac{1}{2}SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 26, $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $W\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $E\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $E\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $E\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $W\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 28, $NW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 29, $N\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $W\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$, $S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$,
 $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $S\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$.

Total = 4,437.50 acres

All of these parcels meet *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*
Sec. 203(a)(3) sales criteria.

APPENDIX B

Disposal Area 19*

San Bernardino Meridian, California

T. 9 N., R. 22 E.,

(A) sec. 13, lot 7.

(B) sec. 13, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Total = 10.45 acres

All of these parcels meet *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*
Sec. 203(a)(1) sales criteria.

*The legal descriptions and acreages for Disposal Area 19 are tentative,
as the area has not yet been fully surveyed.

APPENDIX C

ACQUISITION AREAS

Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment

Topock North

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 19 N., R. 22 W.,
sec. 9, lot 1 (92).

Total = 2.07 acres

Buck Mountains

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 15 N., R. 18 W.,
sec. 5, lots 1 to 4, incl., S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ (93).

Total = 479.72 acres

Mohave Foothills/Bajada

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 14 N., R. 18 W.,
sec. 1, lots 1 and 2, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (105).

T. 15 N., R. 18 W.,
sec. 9, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ (104);
sec. 17, all (103).

T. 15 N., R. 19 W.,
sec. 1, lots 1 to 4, incl., S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ (98);
sec. 11, all (99);
sec. 13, all (102);
sec. 15, all (101);
sec. 17, all (100).

Total = 4,478.75 acres

Mohave Mountains (Desert Tortoise Habitat)

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 14 N., R. 17 W.,
sec. 19, lots 1 to 4, incl., E $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$ (18*).

T. 14 N., R. 18 W.,
sec. 3, lots 1 to 4, incl., S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ (94).

Total = 1,277.28 acres

APPENDIX C

Mohave Mountains (Natural Values)

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 14 N., R. 19 W.,
sec. 13, MS 1429 (95).

Total = 19.37 acres

Black Mountain

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 14 N., R. 17 W.,
sec. 21, all (19*);
sec. 23, all (20*).

Total = 1,280.00 acres

Aubrey Hills

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 12 N., R. 18 W.,
sec. 21, all (111);
sec. 33, all (112).

Total = 1,280.00 acres

Bill Williams River

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 10 N., R. 16 W.,
sec. 3, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 4, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 5, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ (96).

T. 11 N., R. 15 W.,
sec. 31, lot 1 (96).

T. 11 N., R. 16 W.,
sec. 16, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 20, all;
sec. 21, all;
sec. 25, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 26, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 27, S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 28, all;
sec. 29, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 30, lots 1 to 3, incl., por. (N $\frac{1}{2}$) of
lot 4, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$,
N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 31, lots 3 and 4, S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 32, lot 1, N $\frac{1}{2}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 33, all;

APPENDIX C

Bill Williams River (continued)

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

sec. 34, all;
sec. 35, all;
sec. 36, all (96).

Total = 7,768.57 acres

Buckskin Mountains (Swansea Wilderness)

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 10 N., R. 15 W.,
sec. 7, lots 1 to 4, incl., $E\frac{1}{2}$, $E\frac{1}{2}W\frac{1}{2}$ (50*).

Total = 633.12 acres

Big Maria Mountains

San Bernardino Meridian, California

T. 2 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 36, lots 1 to 4, incl., $N\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $NW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$ (106).

T. 3 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 36, lots 1 and 2 (107).

T. 4 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 36, lot 1 (108).

T. 5 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 1, lots 2 to 4, incl. (108);
sec. 12, lot 2 (109).

T. 5 S., R. 24 E.,
sec. 7, lot 2 (110).

Total = 489.49 acres

Cibola Valley

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 1 S., R. 23 W.,
sec. 5, lot 4 (116);
sec. 6, $SE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$ (117);
sec. 18, $SE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$ (115);
sec. 32, $N\frac{1}{2}$, $E\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}$ (114).

Total = 679.98 acres

APPENDIX C

Milpitas Wash

San Bernardino Meridian, California

T. 11 S., R. 22 E.,
sec. 17, lots 1 to 4, incl., $W\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$ (97).

Total = 199.99 acres

Chocolate Mountains

San Bernardino Meridian, California

T. 13 S., R. 23 E.,
sec. 36, $W\frac{1}{2}W\frac{1}{2}$ (119).

Total = 160.00 acres

Dome Valley

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 8 S., R. 20 W.,
sec. 11, $SW\frac{1}{4}$ (118).

Total = 160.00 acres

Wellton Mesa

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 8 S., R. 17 W.,
sec. 31, $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$ (113).

Total = 10.00 acres

() Numbers in parentheses at the end of individual legal descriptions refer to parcels identified on the attached maps.

* Acquisition Areas 18, 19, 20, and 50 were identified in the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement but not included in the approved Resource Management Plan. All other acquisition areas have been identified as part of this amendment.

APPENDIX D

WITHDRAWAL AREA FOR THE LA POSA LONG-TERM VISITOR AREA

Yuma District Resource Management Plan Amendment

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 3 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 1, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 2, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 3, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 4, lots 1 to 4, incl., $S\frac{1}{2}N\frac{1}{2}$, $S\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 9, all;
sec. 10, all;
sec. 11, all;
sec. 12, all;
sec. 14, all;
sec. 15, all;
sec. 16, $E\frac{1}{2}$, $NW\frac{1}{4}$, $N\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$, por. of $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$,
 $SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 21, por. of $E\frac{1}{2}$, por. of $NW\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 22, $E\frac{1}{2}$, por. of $SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 23, all.

T. 4 N., R. 19 W.,

sec. 26, $S\frac{1}{2}$;
sec. 27, $E\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$, $SE\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 28, $S\frac{1}{2}SE\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 33, all;
sec. 34, all;
sec. 35, all;
sec. 36, por. of $NW\frac{1}{4}$, por. of $S\frac{1}{2}$.

Total = 11,400.00 acres, more or less

APPENDIX E

PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND OWNERSHIP ADJUSTMENT ISSUE Yuma District Resource Management Plan

DISPOSAL AREAS

Area	Environmental Assessment	Acres	Location
D-13	AZ-050-7-26 (1987)	270.56	T. 14 N., R. 20 W., G&SRM sec. 4, lots 5, 8, and 9; sec. 9, lots 2, 3, 6, and 7, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.
D-14	AZ-050-9-07 (1989)	257.59	T. 8 N., R. 23 E., SBM sec. 4, lot 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.
D-15	AZ-050-9-07 (1989)	59.89	T. 10 S., R. 23 W., G&SRM sec. 18, lot 10, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.
D-16	AZ-050-9-07 (1989)	74.52	T. 8 S., R. 21 W., G&SRM sec. 16, lots 7 and 9 E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.
D-17	AZ-050-9-07 (1989)	52.59	T. 3 N., R. 21 W., G&SRM sec. 3, lots 9 and 10.

LIST OF MAPS

- 2-1 Desert Tortoise Habitat Areas
 - A - Havasu Resource Area
 - B - Yuma Resource Area
- 2-2 Bill Williams Riparian Management Area
- 2-3 Disposal Areas
 - A - D-8
 - B - D-18
 - C - D-19
- 2-4 Acquisition Areas
 - A - Topock North
 - B - Buck Mountains, Mohave Foothills/Bajada, and Mohave Mountains
 - C - Black Mountain
 - D - Aubrey Hills
 - E - Bill Williams River and Buckskin Mountains
 - F - Big Maria Mountains
 - G - Big Maria Mountains
 - H - Big Maria Mountains
 - I - Cibola Valley
 - J - Milpitas Wash
 - K - Chocolate Mountains
 - L - Dome Valley
 - M - Wellton Mesa
- 2-5 Lands Proposed for Withdrawal at the La Posa Long-Term Visitor Area
- 3-1 Short-Term Camping Areas in the Quartzsite Area

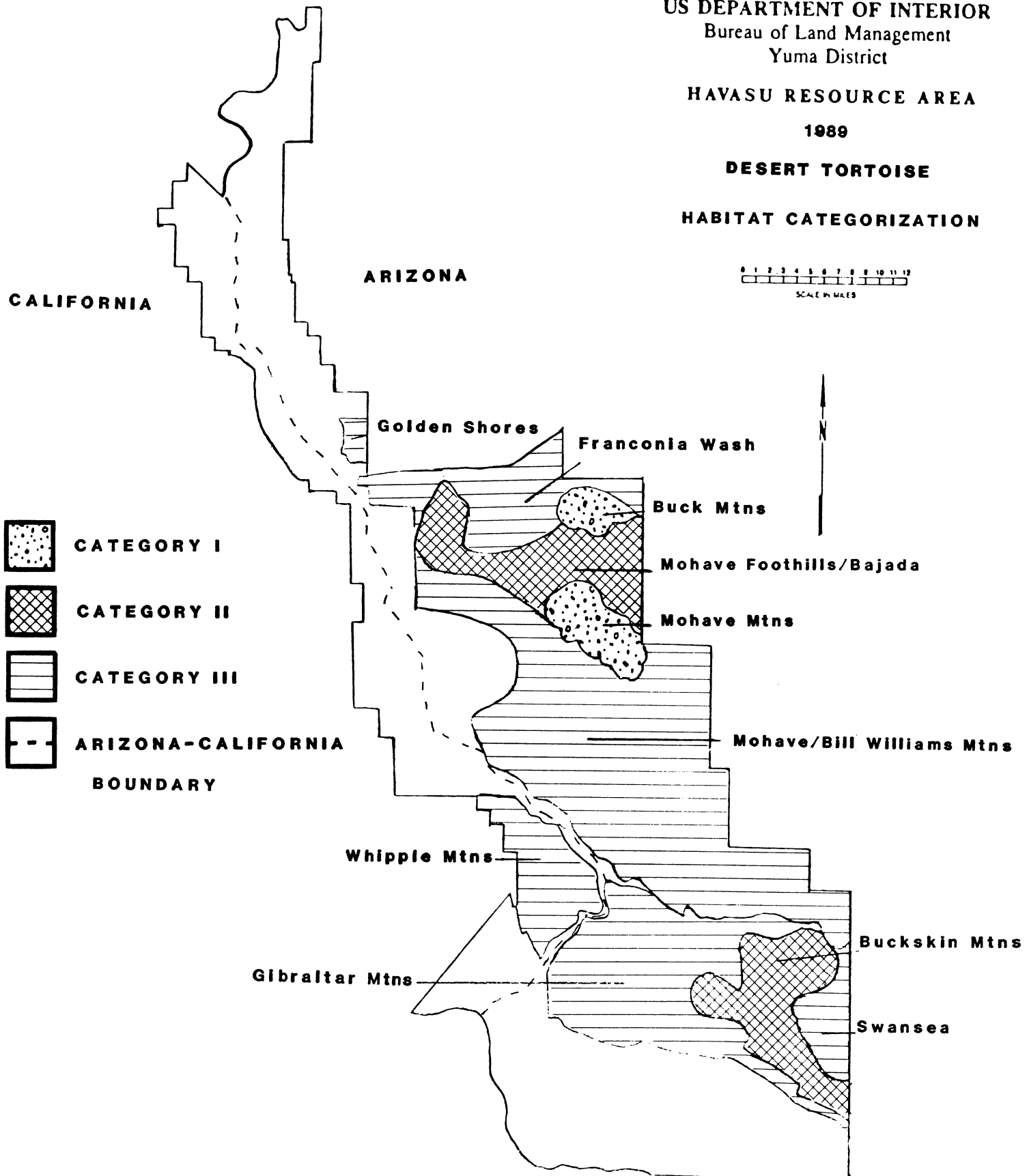
US DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District

HAVASU RESOURCE AREA

1989

DESERT TORTOISE

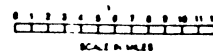
HABITAT CATEGORIZATION



US DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District

YUMA RESOURCE AREA
1989

DESERT TORTOISE
HABITAT CATEGORIZATION



Big Maria Mtns

Dome Rock Mtns

Palo Verde Foothills

Trigo Mtns



CATEGORY I



CATEGORY II



CATEGORY III

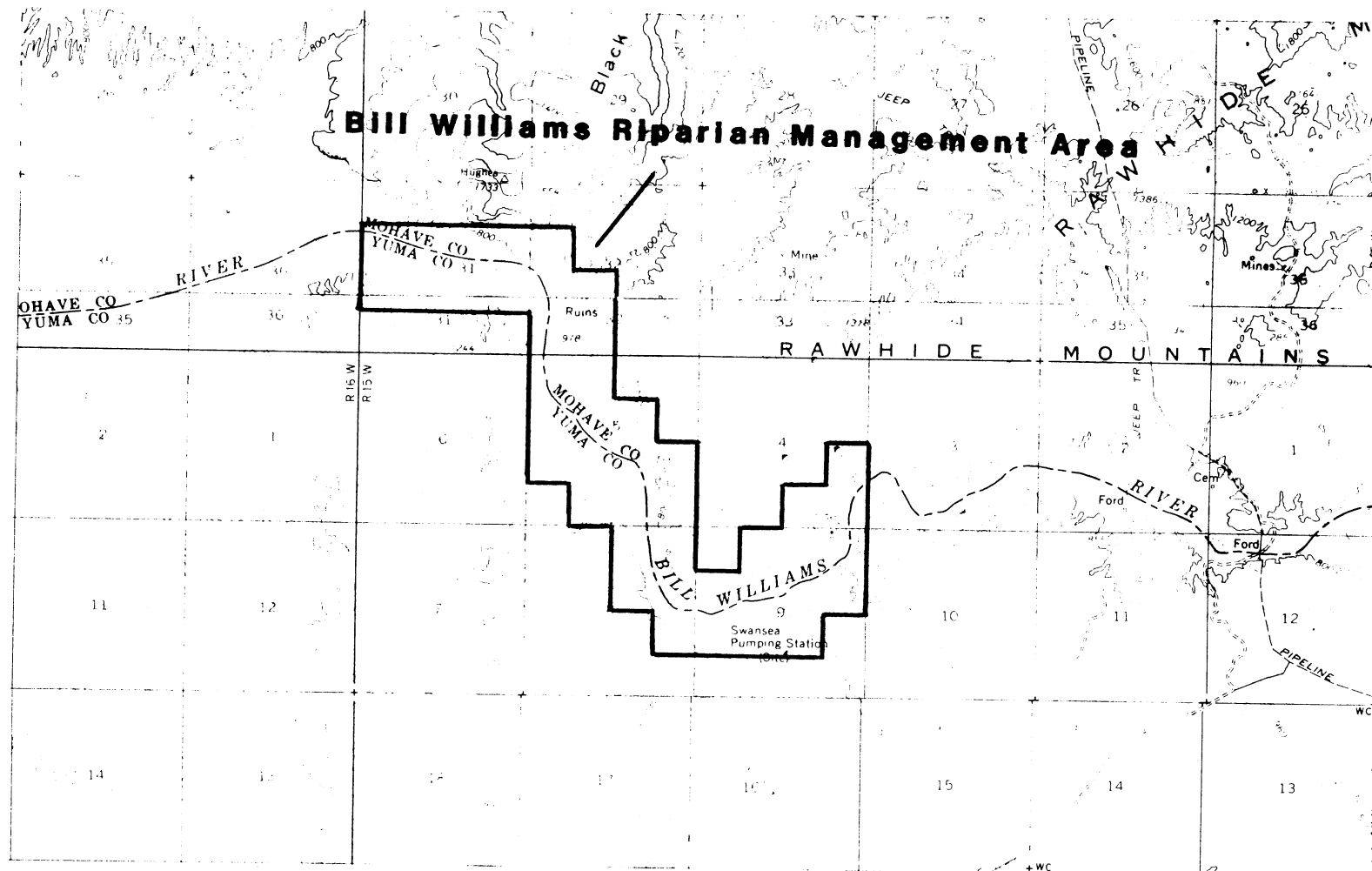


ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA
BOUNDARY

CALIFORNIA

ARIZONA

MAP 2-1B



R 16 W

R 15 W

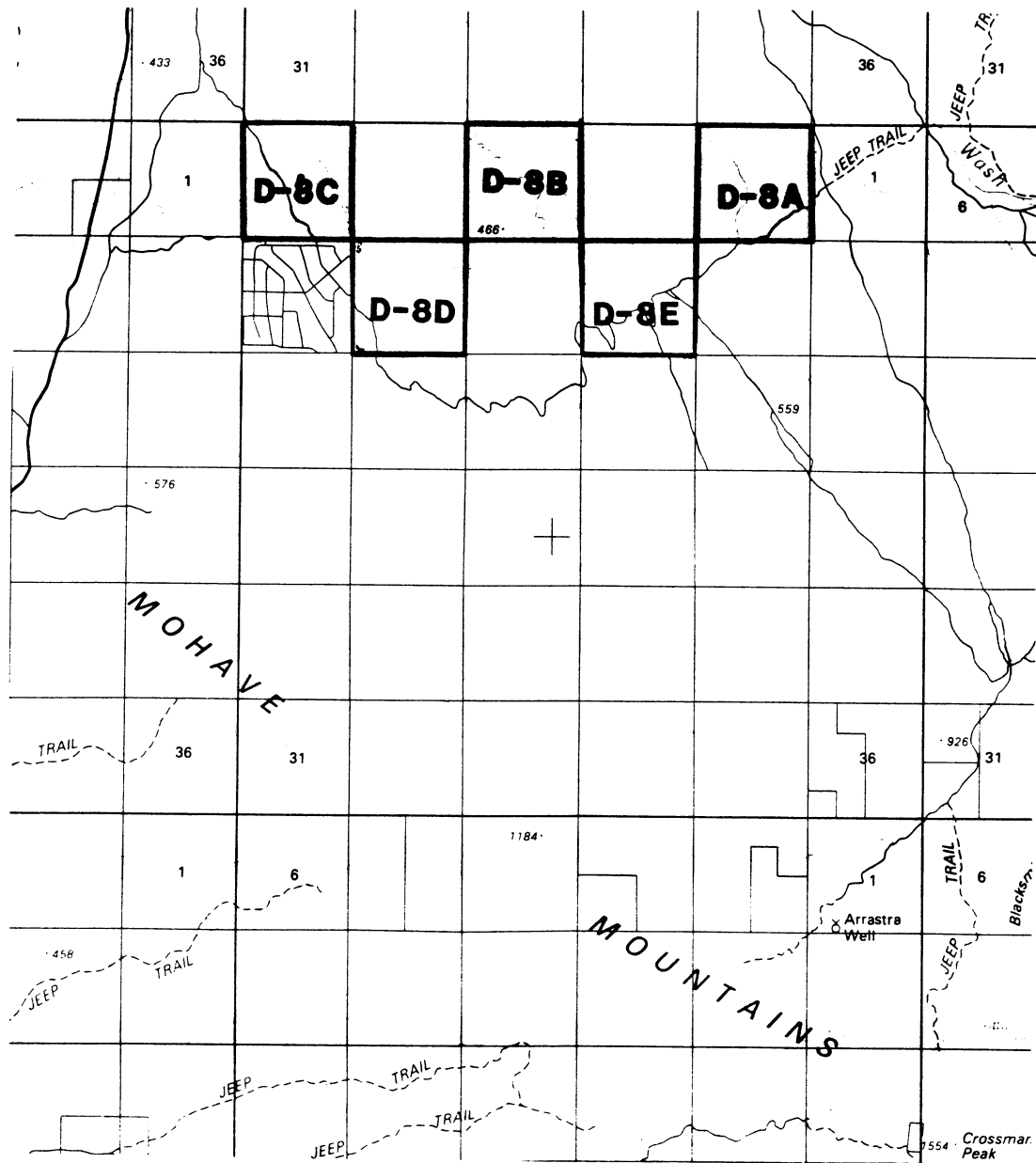
MAP 2-2

Bill Williams Riparian Management Area

R 19 W

T 15 N

T 14 N

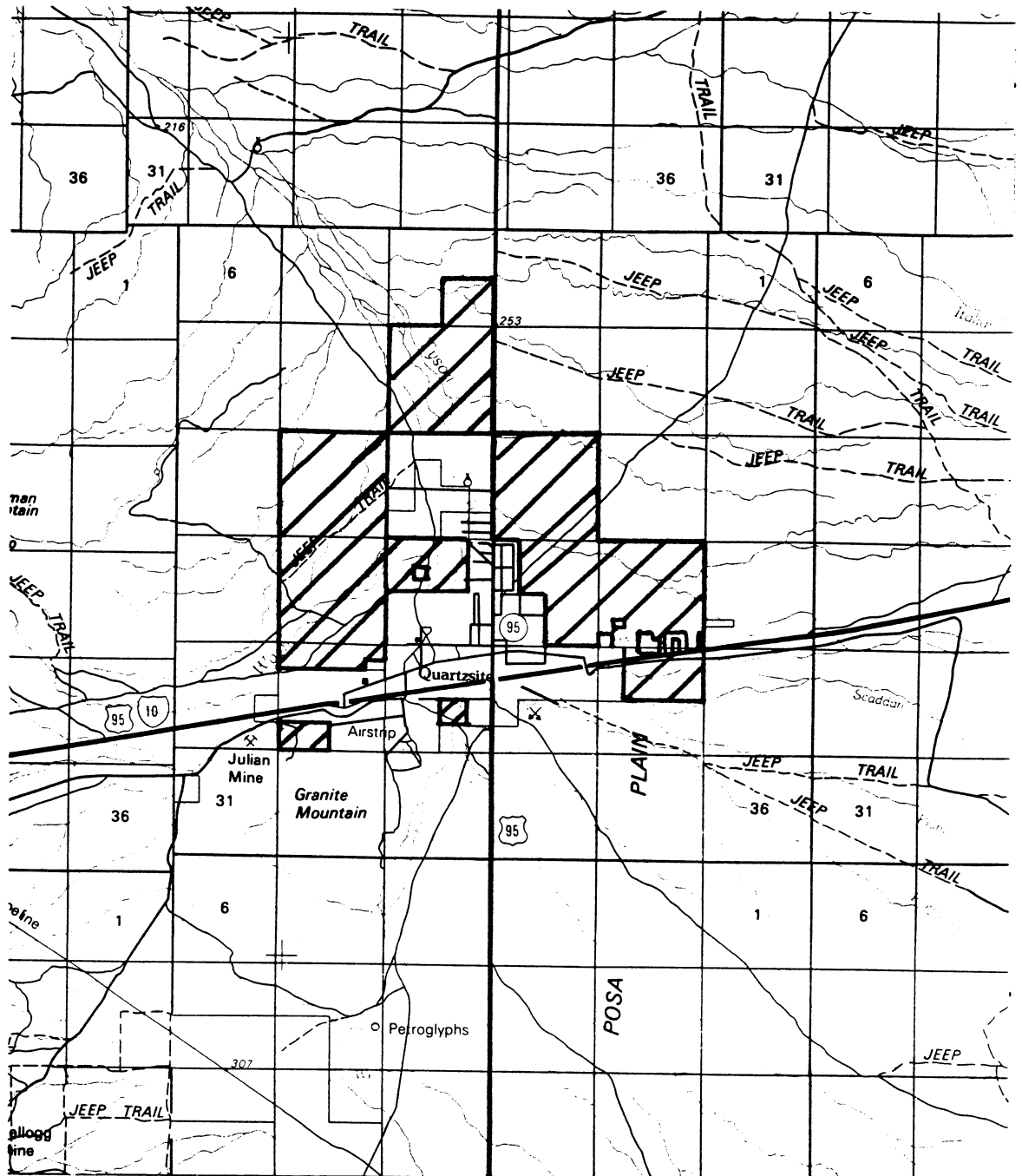


MAP 2-3A

Disposal Area D-8 (Revised)

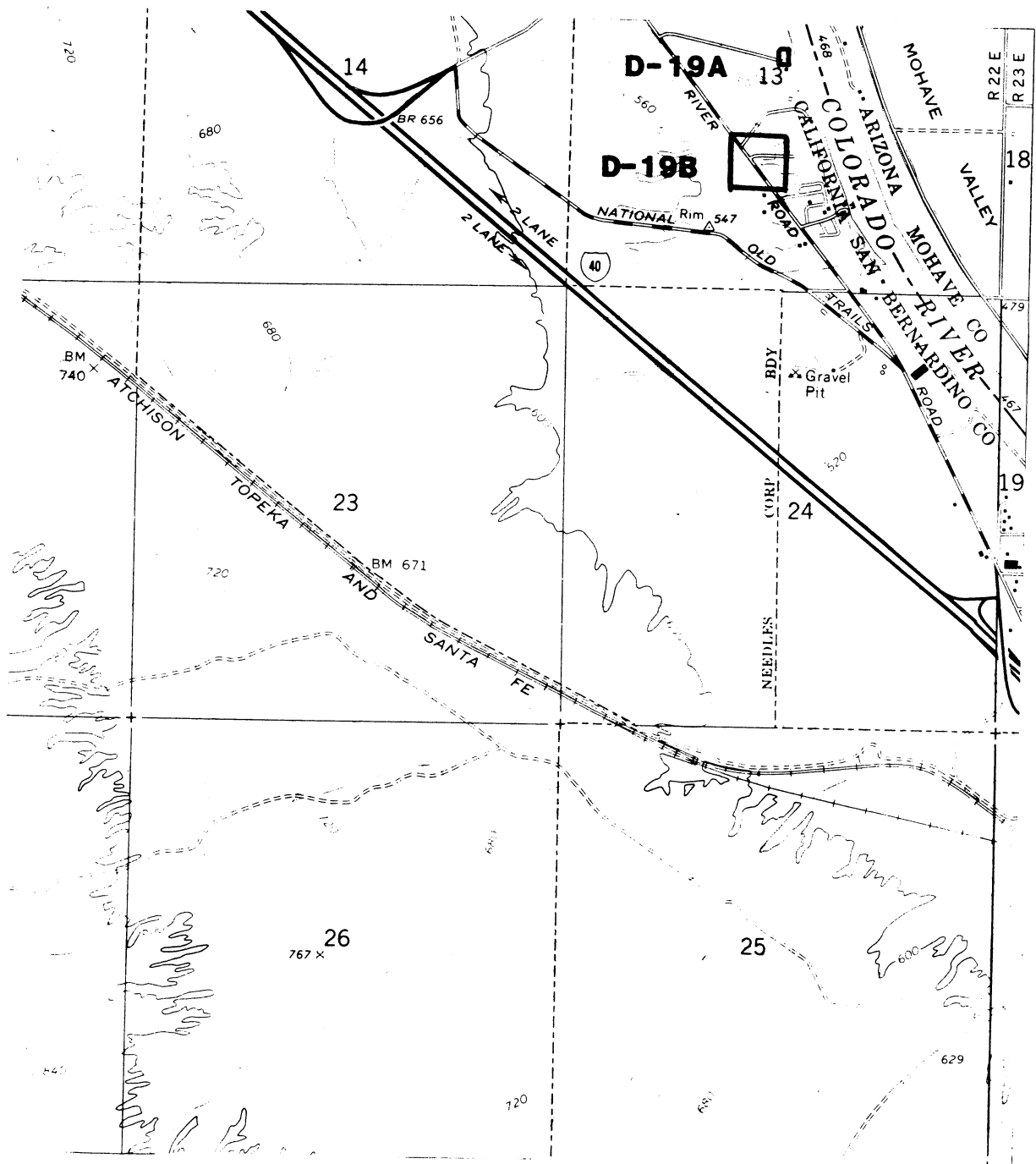
R 19 W

T 4 N



MAP 2-3B

 Disposal Area D-18

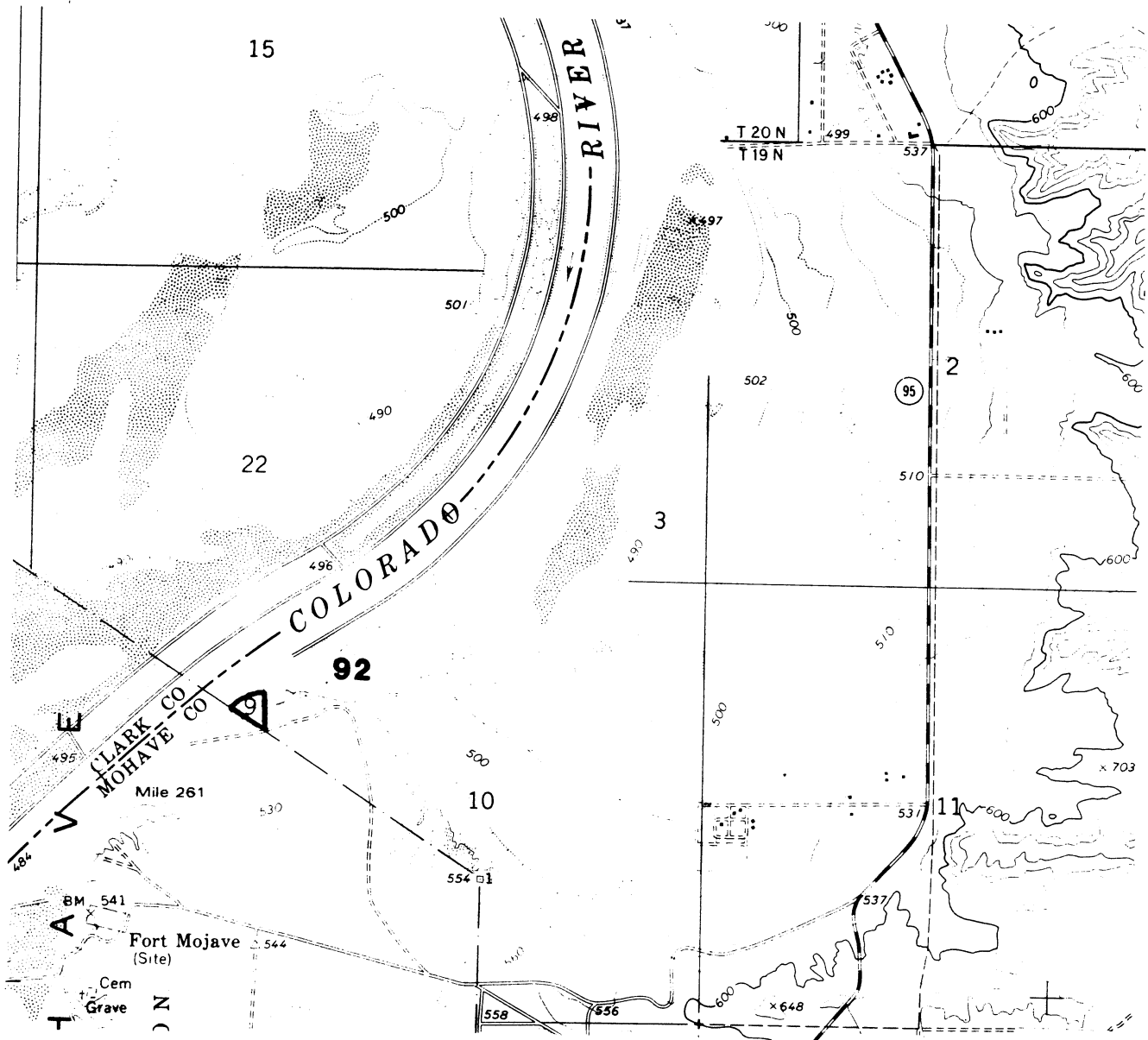


T 9 N

R 22 E

MAP 2-3C

Disposal Area D-19



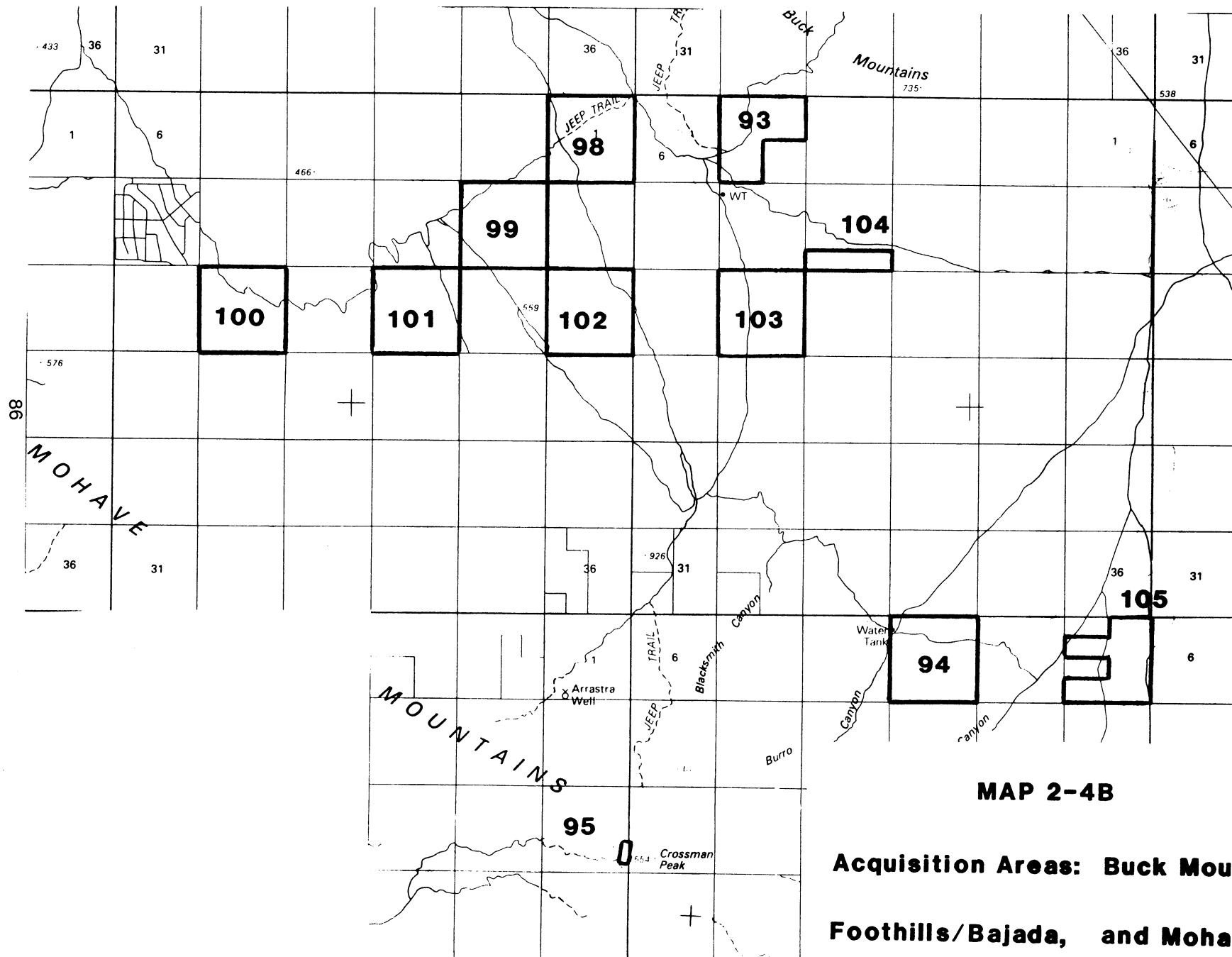
R 22 W

MAP 2-4A

Acquisition Areas: Topock North

R 19 W

R 18 W

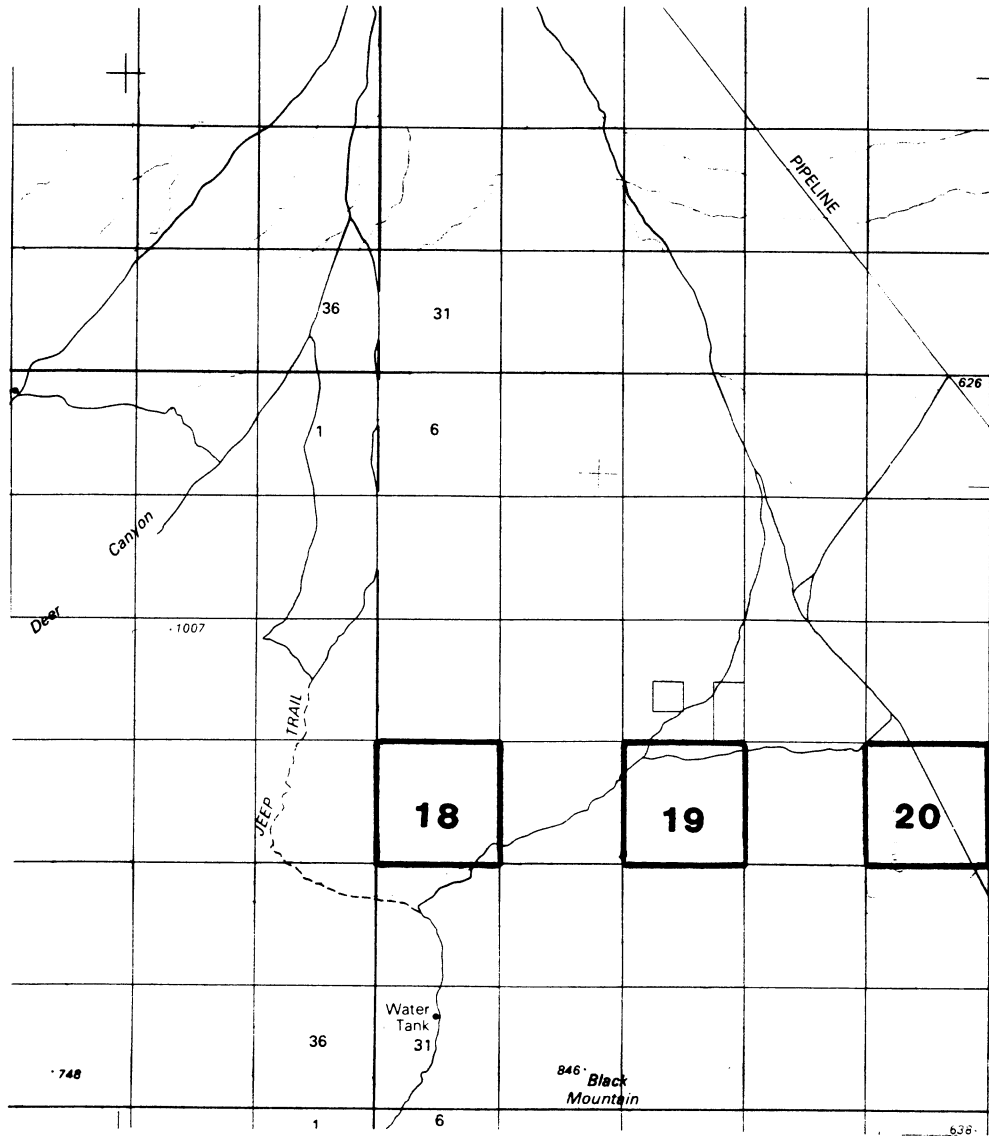


T 15 N

T 14 N

MAP 2-4B

Acquisition Areas: Buck Mountains, Mohave
Foothills/Bajada, and Mohave Mountains



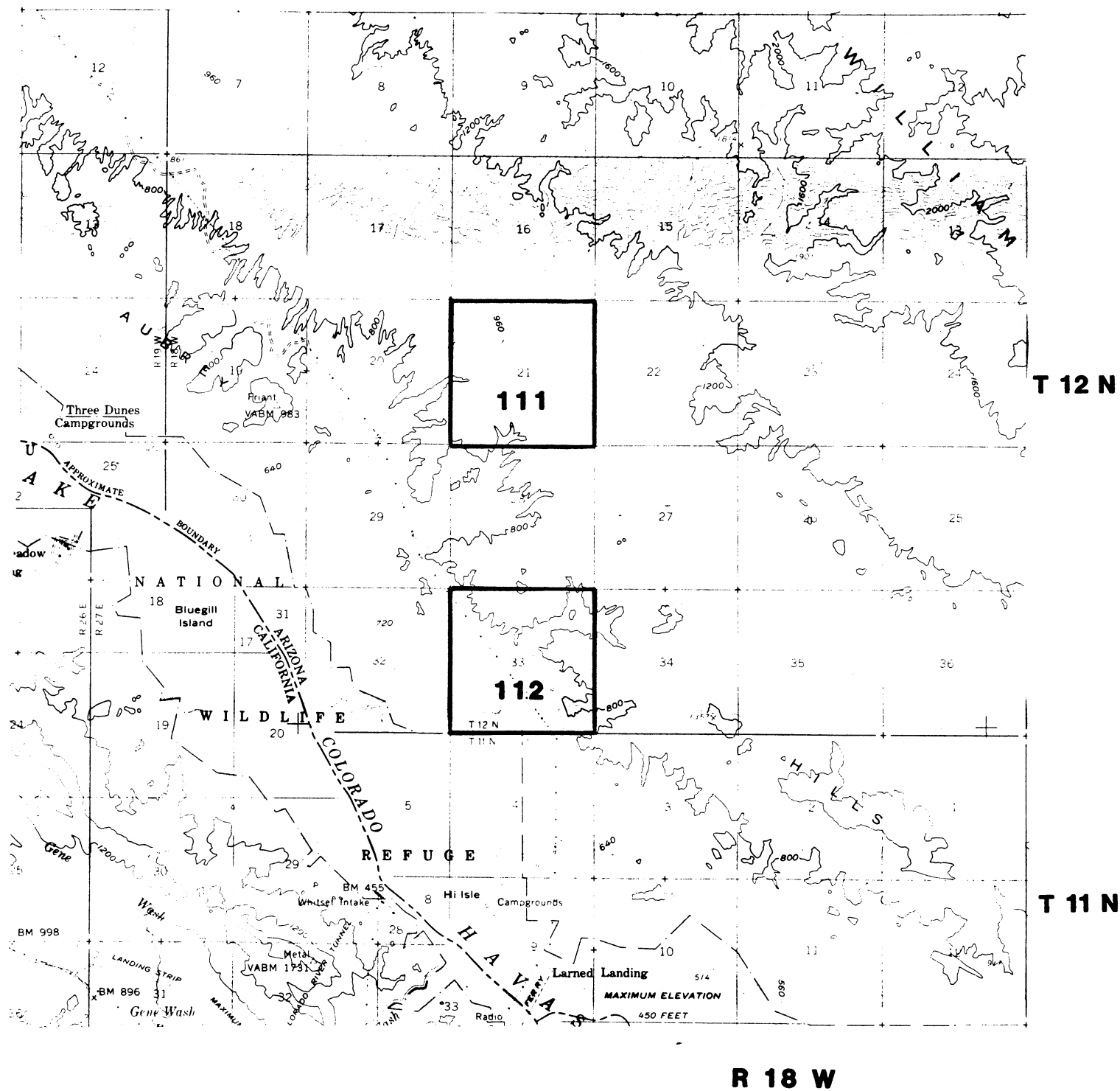
R 16 W

R 17 W

T 14 N

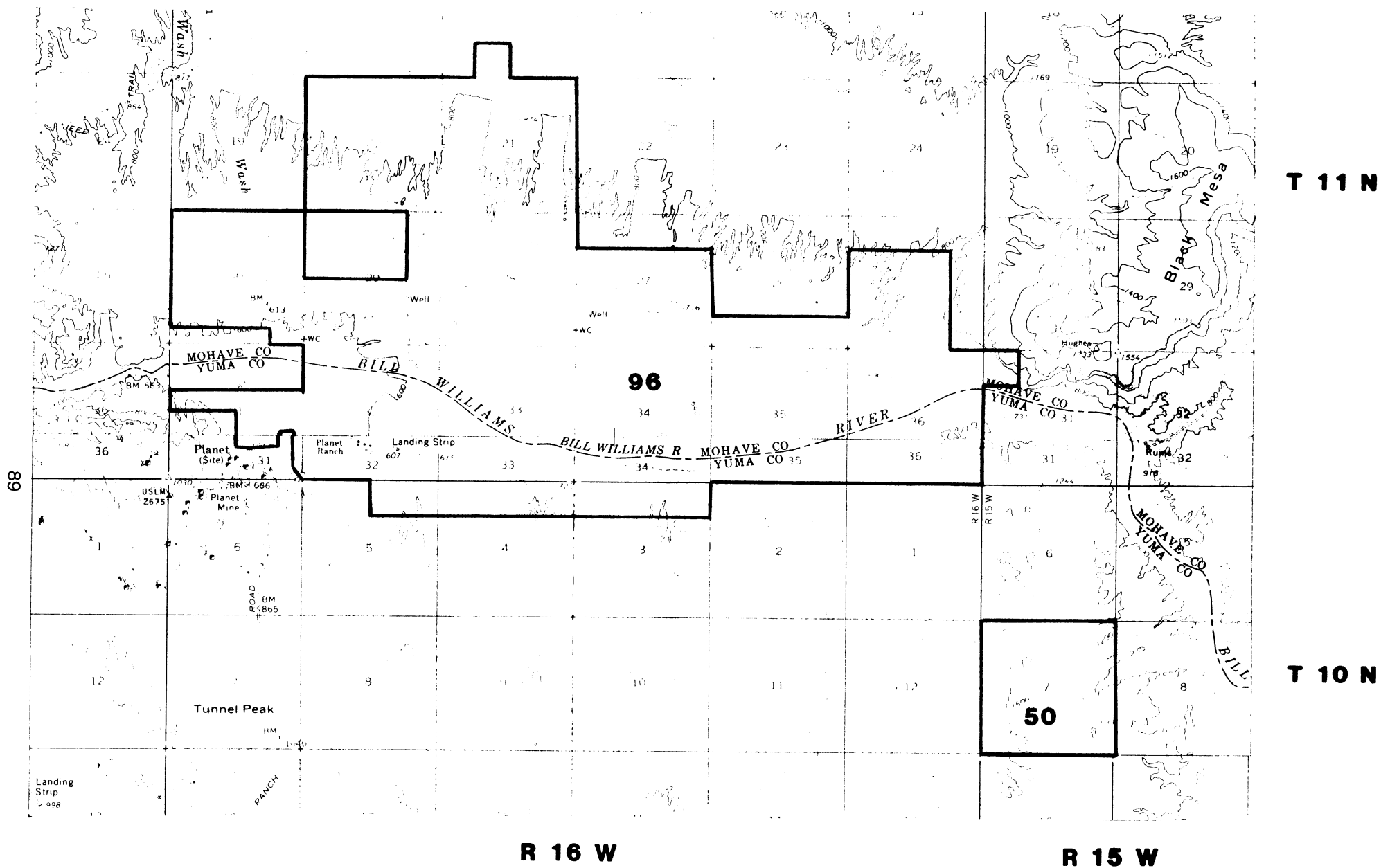
MAP 2-4C

Acquisition Areas: Black Mountain



MAP 2-4D

Acquisition Areas: Aubrey Hills



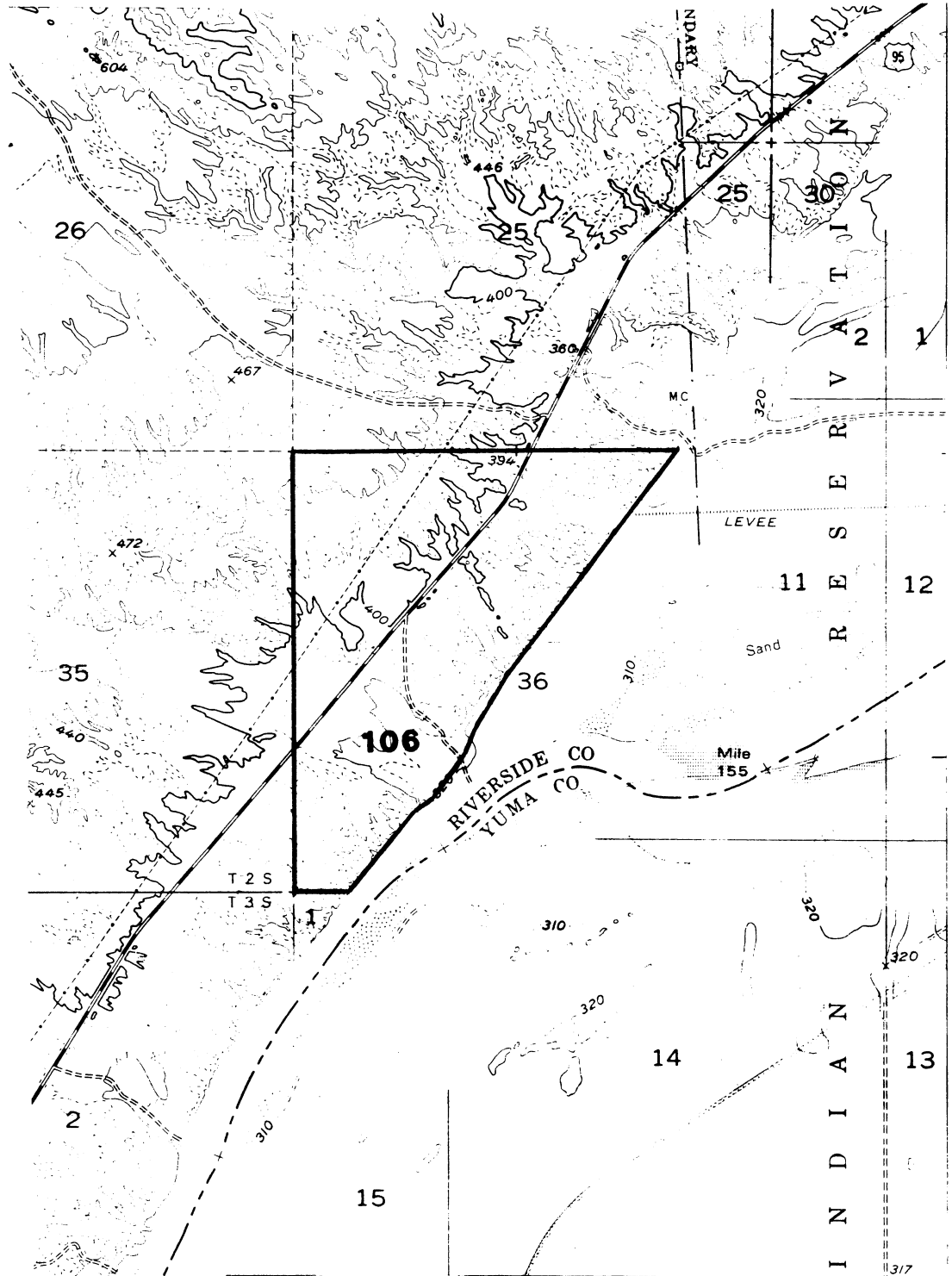
MAP 2-4E

Acquisition Areas: Bill Williams River and Buckskin Mountains

R 23 E

T 2 S

T 3 S



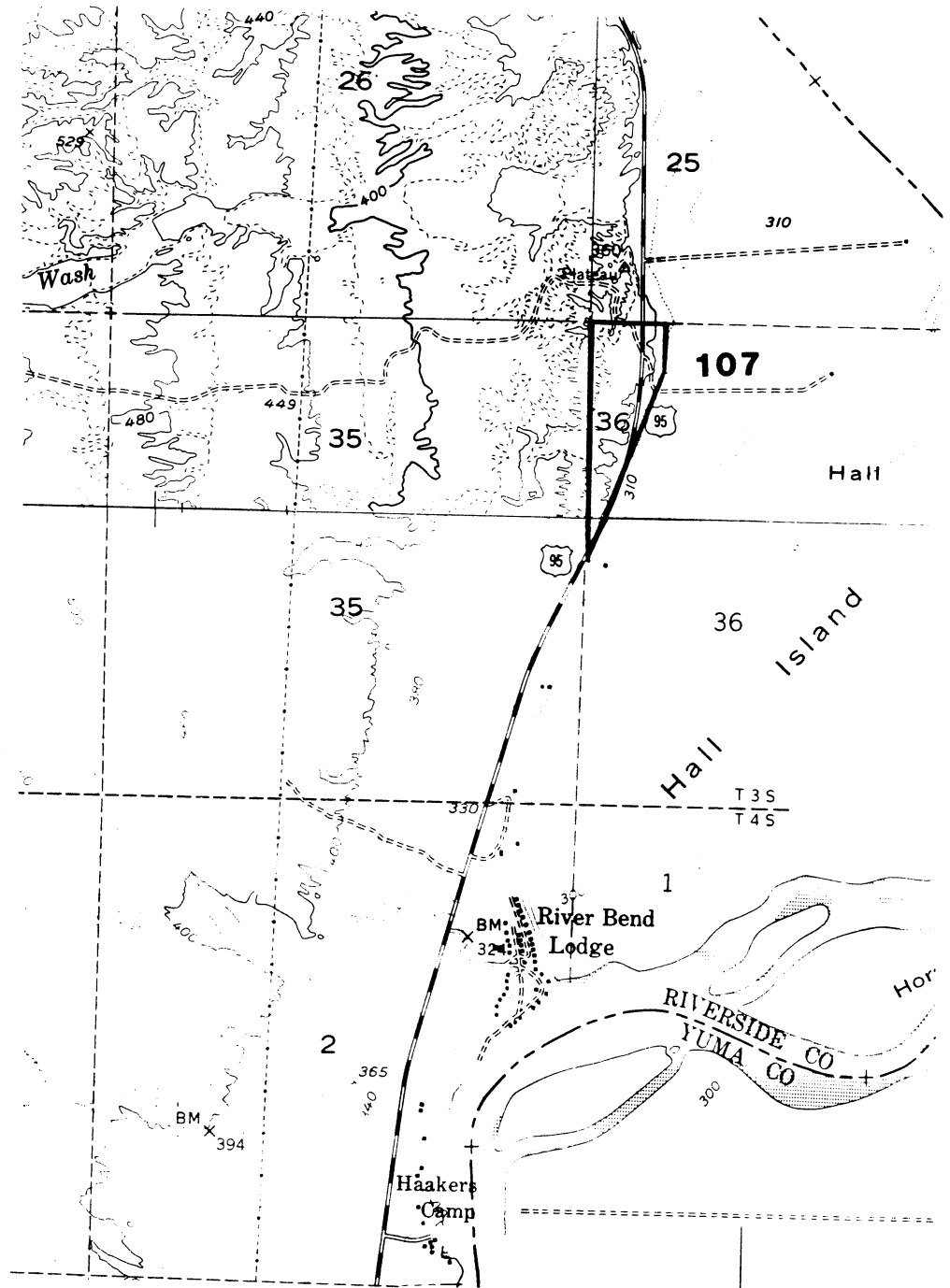
MAP 2-4F

Acquisition Areas: Big Maria Mountains

R 23 E

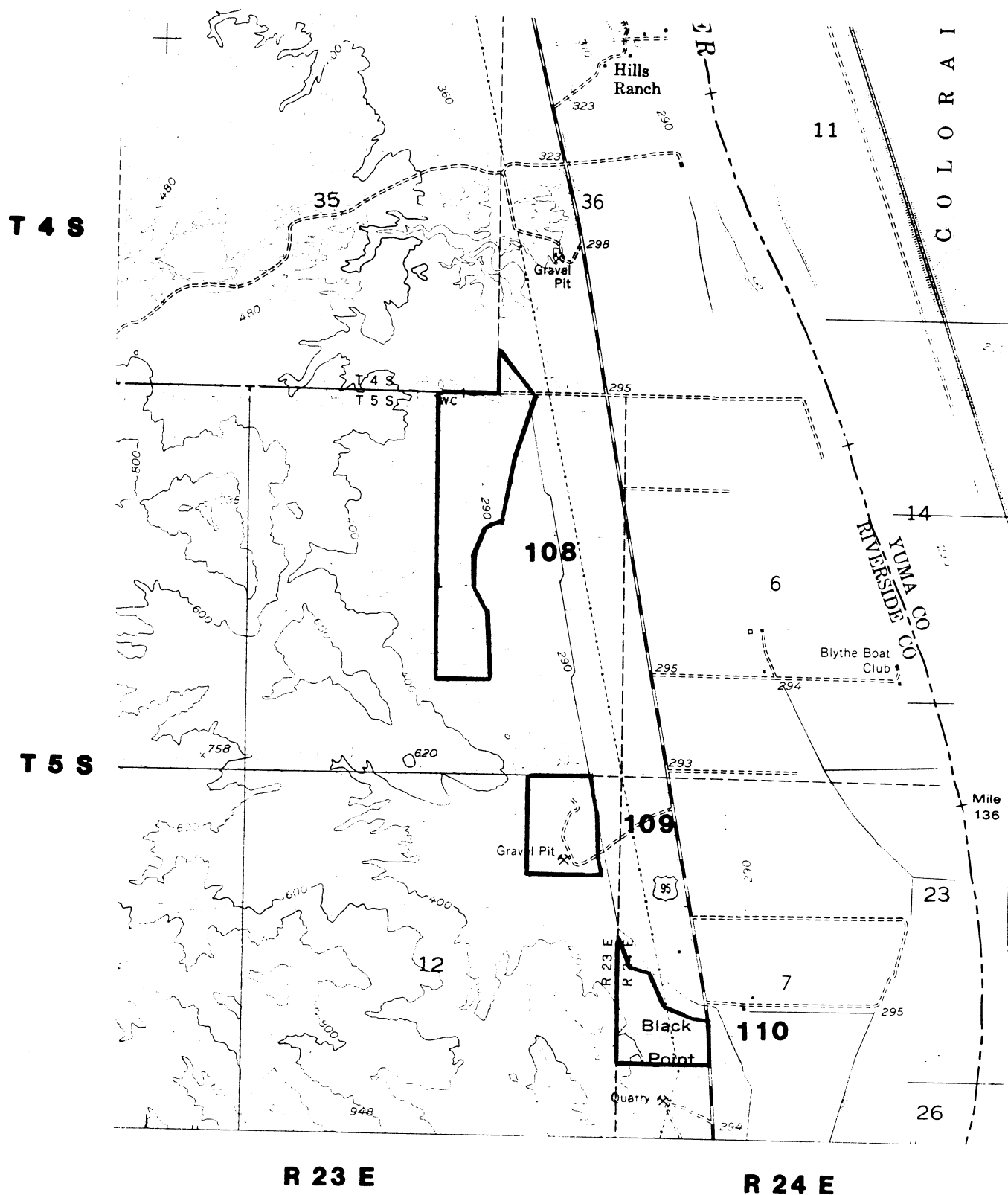
T 3 S

T 4 S



MAP 2-4G

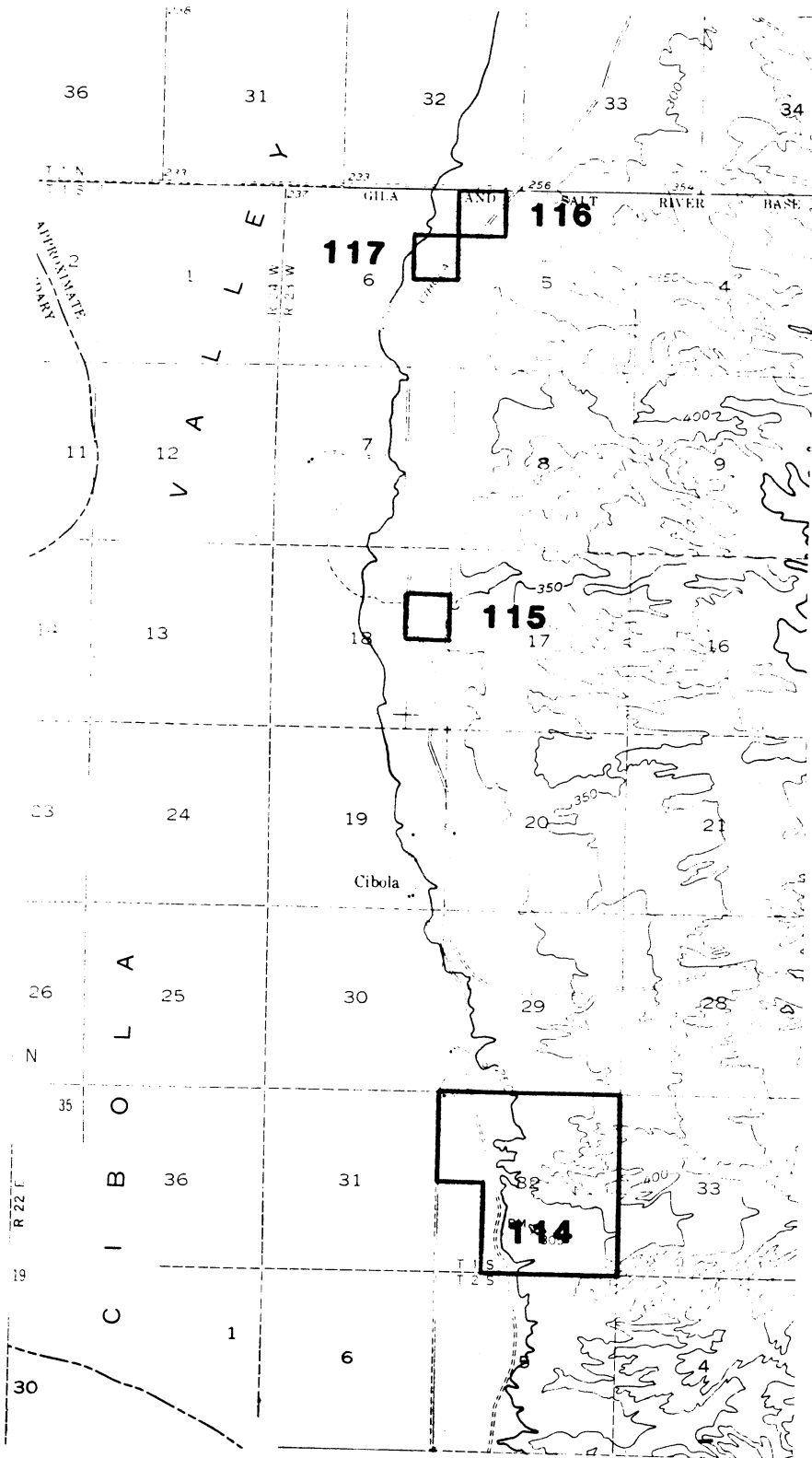
Acquisition Areas: Big Maria Mountains



MAP 2-4H

Acquisition Areas: Big Maria Mountains

R 23 W



T 1 S

MAP 2-41

Acquisition Areas: Cibola Valley

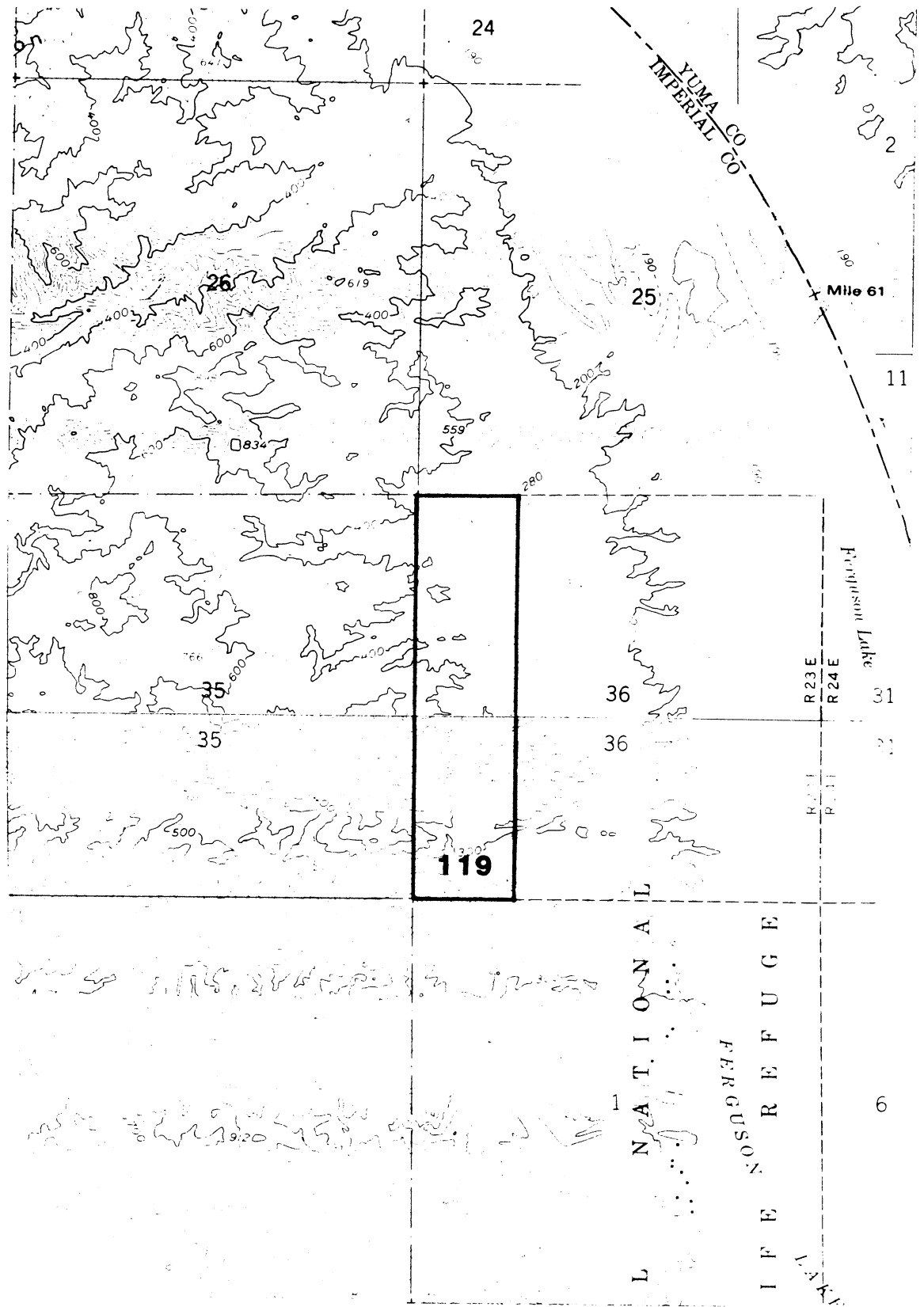


R 22 E

MAP 2-4J

Acquisition Areas: Milpitas Wash

T 13 S

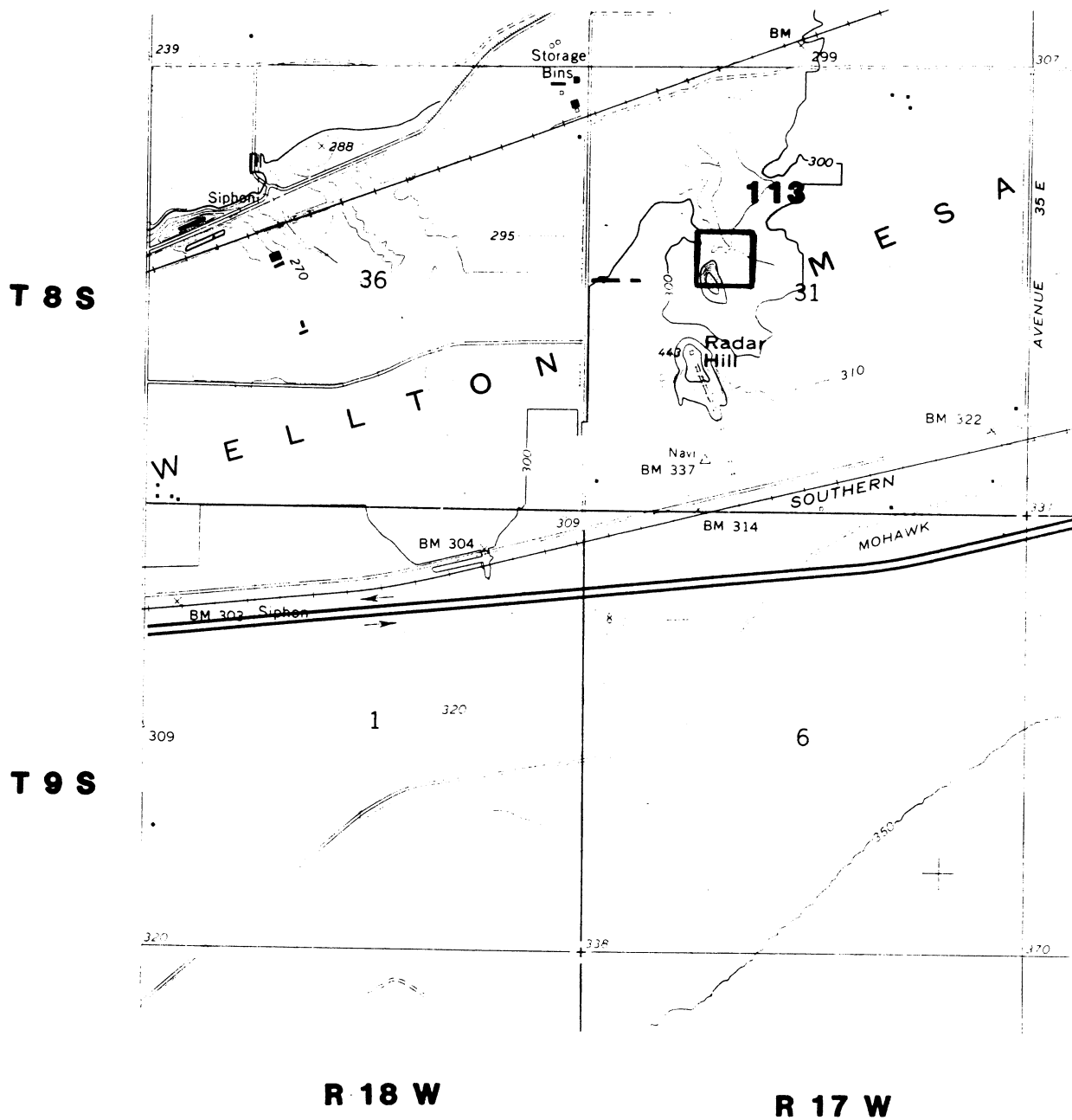


T 14 S

R 23 E

MAP 2-4K

Acquisition Areas: Chocolate Mountains



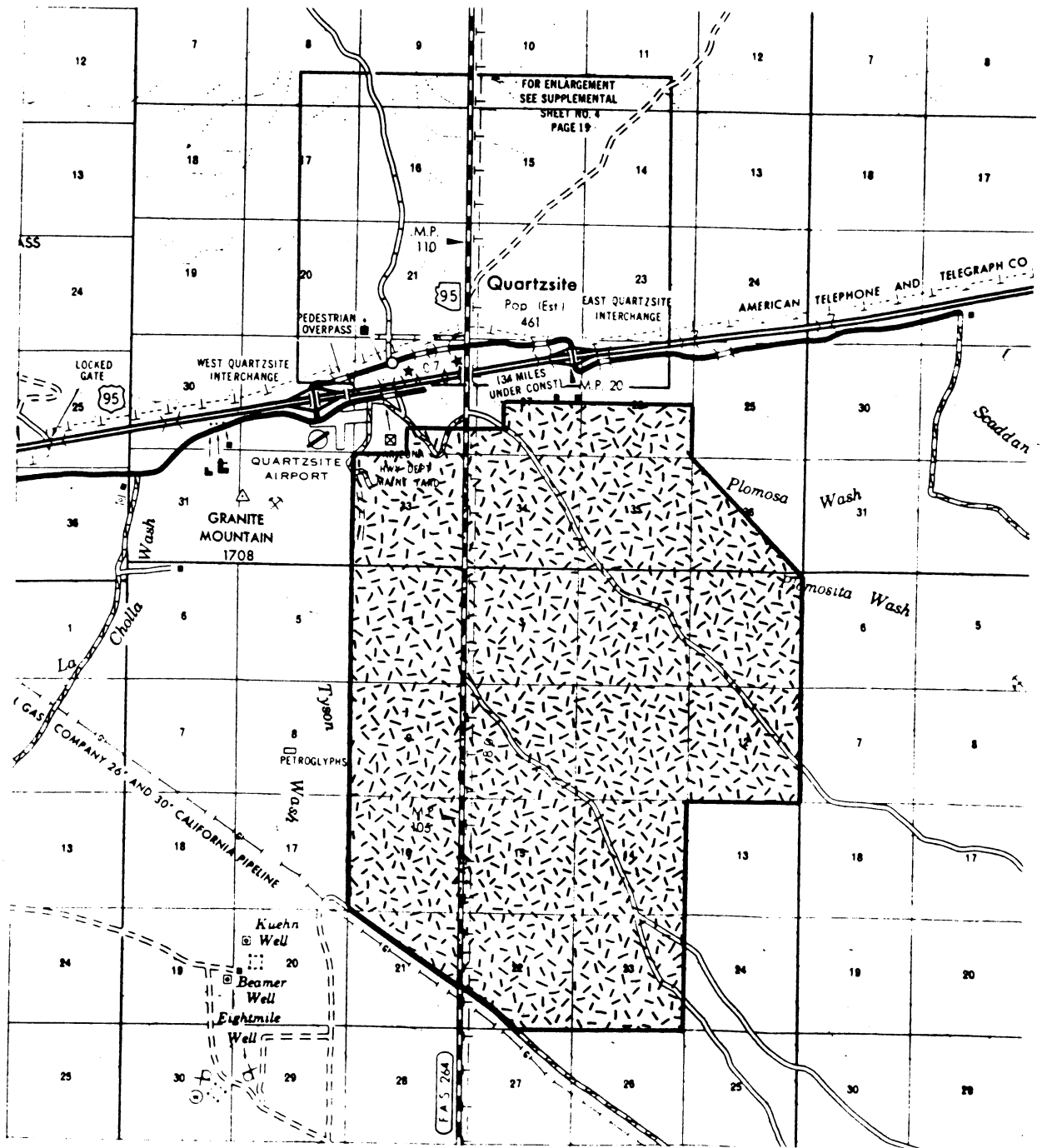
MAP 2-4M

Acquisition Areas: Wellton Mesa

R 19 W

T 4 N

T 3 N



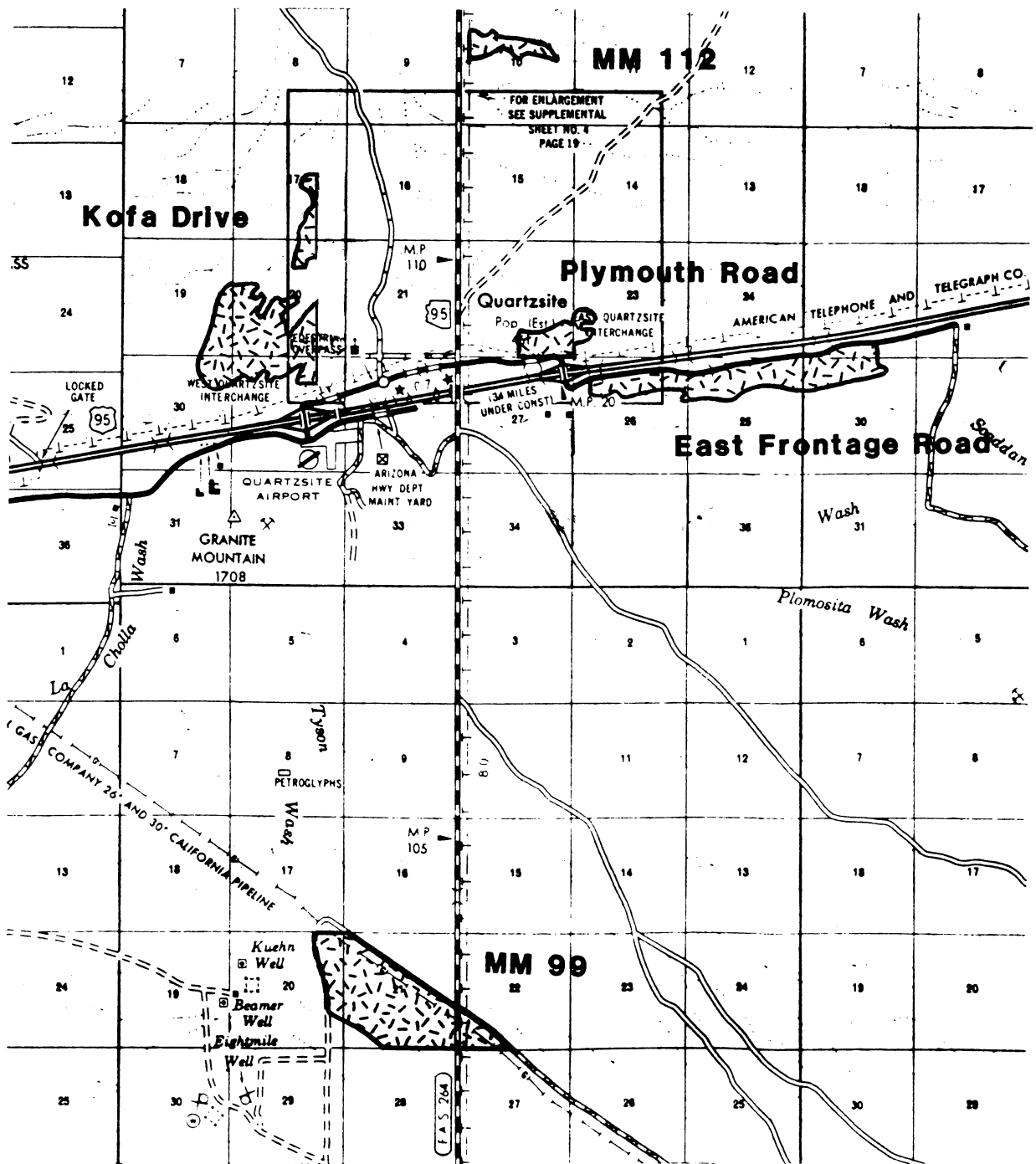
MAP 2-5



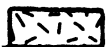
R 19 W

T 4 N

T 3 N



MAP 3-1



Short-Term Camping Areas in the Quartzsite Area

YUMA DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

PLANNING AMENDMENT

Environmental Assessment No. AZ 050-7-26

Title of Action

Prepared by

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District
Havasu Resource Area
Lake Havasu City, Arizona**

Approved March 1988

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Section 202 of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* states, “The Secretary shall, with public involvement and consistent with the terms and conditions of this Act, develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans . . .”

The proposed action is to amend sections of the Yuma District Resource Management Plan. The purpose of the amendment is to identify a specific parcel of public lands that, in the public interest, would be valuable as base lands for exchange proposals. In evaluating exchange proposals, BLM’s objectives would be to 1) acquire lands with high resource values such as wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, significant cultural sites, etc.; 2) consolidate or “block up” public land areas which would provide more efficient management opportunities; and 3) dispose of parcels of land that are difficult or uneconomical to manage because they are small, distant, isolated or have low resource values and their disposal will better serve public use.

A thorough discussion of the exchange program including purpose and need is found in the Yuma District Resource Management Plan and AZ-ES-85-006-1600 Impact Statement. An environmental assessment will be prepared for each specific exchange conducted under this planning amendment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to amend portions of the Yuma District Resource Management Plan.

The objective is for BLM to acquire more efficient management of public lands through consolidation. The Yuma District Resource Management Plan is amended to include a recommendation to evaluate the suitability of making the following lands available for exchange.

Public lands in:

T. 14 N., R. 20 W.,
sec. 4, lots 5, 8, and 9;
sec. 9, lots 2, 3, 6, and 7, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Specific resource management plan decisions affected by the amendment include the following:

Resource Management Plan Issue 4: Land ownership adjustments.

Disposals (page 19 preferred alternative).

This decision is modified to allow approximately 270 acres on the west side of Highway 95 in sections 4 and 9, T. 14 N., R. 20 W., to be available for disposal through exchange. This will increase the acreage designated for disposal to 55,760 acres.

Compliance with all *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* requirements regarding environmental assessments, clearances, and public input will be completed prior to making decisions on specific exchanges or proposals.

Under the proposed action, this exchange could allow BLM to acquire lands in and around wilderness study areas, as well as lands with good wildlife habitat, cultural resources, recreational, and other multiple resource values and consolidate land ownership.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would restrict exchange proposals to those public lands identified in the existing Yuma District Resource Management Plan and would not result in improved management for these identified lands.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The existing environment has been described in the Yuma District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

Adverse Impacts

Anticipated adverse impacts resulting from exchange programs would be minimal.

Low value wildlife habitat and other resources may be transferred from Federal ownership. In accordance with Section 206(a) of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*, all exchanges must be in the public interest.

Beneficial Impacts

As a result of exchange, BLM could acquire lands adjacent to a wilderness study area, which have valuable recreation and habitat for wildlife species.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative no exchange would occur. Management responsibilities would remain the same. No cost management savings would accrue to either agency. Acquisition of the involved lands for the development of various resource values would not occur. The future initiation of such exchange proposals would possibly be jeopardized by development of the offered private lands.

MITIGATING MEASURES

The mitigating measures for exchange proposals under both alternatives will be developed during preparation of the required environmental assessments and decision records.

State:	Arizona
District:	Yuma
Resource Area:	Havasu
EA No.:	AZ-050-7-26
Action:	Planning Amendment

DECISION RECORD

Finding of No Significant Impact

Impacts to the physical environment caused by the proposed planning amendment will be negligible. The proposed action would not significantly affect the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Decision Factors

1. The current Resource Management Plan did not identify these lands for exchange.
2. These public lands could better be managed by private parties and would benefit the local communities.
3. By amending the Resource Management Plan, the BLM could increase its acquisitions of critical wildlife habitat, lands with cultural resource values, recreational values, and inholdings within wilderness study areas.
4. The proposed action would augment the efforts of private landowners.
5. Compliance with all requirements regarding environmental assessments, clearances, and public input will be completed prior to making a decision to accommodate each exchange proposal.
6. The proposed action would not conflict with any known local, State, or Federal plans or programs.
7. The proposed amendment is in accordance with Section 202 of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*.
8. Through the process of public review and consistency coordination with local, State and Federal agencies, no substantive comments were received.

DECISION

In accordance with Section 202 of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* and the decision factors previously listed, the Yuma District Resource

Management Plan is amended to reflect the proposed action described in the Yuma District Environmental Assessment for Planning Amendment.

This action will be implemented 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

YUMA DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

PLANNING AMENDMENT

Environmental Assessment No. AZ 050-9-07

Disposal of Additional Parcels of Public Land

Prepared by

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Yuma District**

Approved December 1988

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Section 202 of the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* states, "The Secretary shall, with public involvement and consistent with the terms and conditions of this Act, develop, maintain, and when appropriate, revise land use plans . . ."

The Yuma District (BLM) has identified a need to amend the Yuma District Resource Management Plan. The purpose of the amendment is to identify additional parcels of public lands that, in the public interest, would be valuable as base lands for exchange proposals. In evaluating exchange proposals, BLM's objectives are to (1) acquire lands with high resource values such as wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, significant cultural sites, etc.; (2) consolidate or "block up" public land in areas which would provide more efficient management opportunities; and (3) dispose of parcels of land that are difficult or uneconomical to manage because they are small, distant, isolated, or have low resource values and their disposal will better serve public use. A thorough discussion of the exchange program including purpose and need is found in the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan and AZ-ES-85-006-1600 Impact Statement. An environmental assessment will be prepared for each specific exchange conducted under this planning amendment.

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to amend portions of the Yuma District Resource Management Plan. The objective is for BLM to make the Resource Management Plan more useful for efficient management of public lands through consolidation. Under the proposed action, the Yuma District Resource Management Plan would be amended to make the following lands available for disposal through exchange:

Within the city limits of Needles, California, on the south side of town described as sec. 4, lot 4, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, T. 8 N., R. 23 E., SBM; approximately 10

miles south of Yuma, Arizona, described as sec. 18, lot 10, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, T. 10 S., R. 23 W., G&SRM; approximately 15 miles east of Yuma along Highway 95 described as sec. 16, lots 7 and 9, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, T. 8 S., R. 21 W., G&SRM; approximately 6 miles east of Ehrenberg, Arizona, just south of Interstate 10 described as sec. 3, lots 9 and 10, T. 3 N., R. 21 W., G&SRM.

Specific resource management plan decisions affected by the amendment include the following:

Resource Management Plan Issue 4: Land ownership adjustments.

Disposals (page 19, Preferred Alternative).

This decision is modified to allow approximately 445 acres as described above to be available for disposal through exchange. This will increase the acreage designated for disposal to 56,205 acres.

Compliance with all National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 requirements regarding environmental assessments, clearances, and public input would be completed prior to making decisions on specific exchange or proposals.

Under the proposed action, this exchange could allow BLM to acquire lands in and around wilderness study areas (as well as lands with good wildlife habitat, cultural resources, recreational, and other multiple resource values) and consolidate land ownership.

No Action Alternative

Under No Action Alternative, the Yuma District Resource Management Plan would not be amended to allow for the disposal of additional parcels of public land.

The No Action Alternative would restrict exchange proposals to those public lands identified in the existing Yuma District Resource Management Plan and would not result in improved management for these identified lands.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment has been described in the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Anticipated Impact of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The environmental consequences of land disposals in the Yuma District, as amended by the proposed action, would not substantially differ from those described for the Preferred Alternative in the Final Yuma District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The No Action Alternative

Since no plan amendment would occur under this alternative, no new impacts would result from land disposals in the Yuma District.

Mitigating Measures

Mitigating measures for exchange proposals will be developed during preparation of the required environmental assessments and decision records.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The following organizations and agencies received copies of the draft environmental assessment:

Arizona State Agencies

Governor Rose Mofford
Arizona State Clearinghouse

California State Agencies

Governor George Deukmejian
State Clearinghouse

None of these agencies offered comments on the document.

DECISION RECORD

Finding of No Significant Impact

Impacts to the physical environment caused by the proposed planning amendment will be negligible. The proposed action would not significantly affect the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Decision Factors

1. The current Resource Management Plan did not identify these lands for exchange.
2. These public lands could better be managed by private parties and State Government and would benefit the local communities.
3. By amending the Resource Management Plan, the BLM could increase its acquisitions of critical wildlife habitat, lands with cultural resource values, recreational values, and inholdings within wilderness study areas.
4. The proposed action would augment the efforts of private landowners and State Government.
5. Compliance with all requirements regarding environmental assessments, clearances, and public input will be completed prior to making a decision to accommodate each exchange proposal.
6. The proposed action would not conflict with any known local, State, or Federal plans or programs.
7. The proposed amendment is in accordance with Section 202 of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*.
8. Through the process of public review and consistency coordination with local, State and Federal agencies, no substantive comments were received.

Decision

In accordance with Section 202 of *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976* and the decision factors previously listed, the Yuma District Resource

Management Plan is amended to reflect the proposed action described in the Yuma District Environmental Assessment for Planning Amendment.

This action will be implemented 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.